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A
Rational and Historical
ACCOUNT
OF THE
PRINCIPLES
Which gave Birth to the
Late REBELLION,
And of the present
CONTROVERSIES
OF THE
English CLERGY.

By JONATHAN SMEDLEY, A. M.
Rector of Ringcurrane, &c.

L O N D O N :

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By Jonathan Smedley, A.M.
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in Strand-Lane, MDCCLXXII.



T O
The Right Honourable the
Lord C A D O G A N.

My LORD,



HE World cannot but excuse me (whatever Your Lordship may do) for prefixing Your Name to a Discourse, wherein the Late *Rebellion* is often mention'd: Because the important Share which You bore in putting the *speediest* End to it, is the universal Subject of Acknowledgment and Praise.

By many prosperous Campaigns, and successful Negotiations; by every thing admir'd in a Statesman, and eminent in a Soldier: But above all by a *Constancy of Principle*, and that ever employ'd for the

iv DEDICATION.

Good of Your Country, You long contributed to keep the worst of Evils from destroying these Nations ; and, when thro' *Perjury* and *Parricidism*, we were at length, made a Prey unto them, it is a shining Part of Your Glory, that an Arbitrary Popish *Pretender*, and His Foreign, as well as Domestick Abettors, were then soon taught, that Slavery and Popery, Trepidity and Ill Conduct, a bad Cause and worse Hearts, must give way to contrary Vertues.

But, Justice, no doubt, will be done to your Lordship's Merit, by those who write for Posterity : 'Tis Pleasure enough to me, that I live to pay this Tribute to Your Many and Great Services, in defence of the late injur'd and betray'd, but at present triumphant Liberty, and flourishing Religion of these Realms ; begging Leave, amongst Crowds, to subscribe my self,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's most Obliged,
most Humble, and
most Obedient Servant,

Jonathan Smedley.



THE
P R E F A C E.



I Am very sensible of the Danger which attends every one, who, at this Time, attempts to write in Vindication of the Liberty and Freedom of Mankind ; especially as it relates to the Privilege of judging for themselves in Matters of Conscience and Eternal Salvation : That ancient Tyrant and Usurper, Humane Authority, having deeply rooted it self in the Minds of too many of our English Subjects.

Amongst other Reasons of this Misfortune, it is chiefly owing to that Enchantment, whereby the Word Church is made to confine Mens Opinions and Sentiments, to the jejune and rigid Rules of one Set of Men ; from whom to dis-

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differ (tho' they be fallible or erroneous,) is unhappily reckon'd to destroy that Church, and consequently to pull down every thing that is vertuous or true.

However melancholy this Evil may be in it self, we are yet infested with another on the account of it, of a more heinous Nature, if that be possible; which is, that Persons, possess'd of more generous and enlarged Principles, are not allow'd to propagate those Principles, tho' in the most warrantable and decent Manner, without risking the Insults of Personal Reflections and Abuse; and this, more than barbarous, Practice is become so shamefully and abominably in use, and so far exceeds any thing of the sort in Ages past, and is so foul a Reproach and Scandal to the present Times, that I know not what Atonement those Persons will make, who were so unfortunate as to introduce it.

To keep my self clear from Things of this Nature, I have neither named the Persons engag'd now in publick Controversy, nor touch'd upon their Writings, save one Passage alone [p. 15. & seq.] of the Bishop of Bangor's Preservative, which his Enemies allow to be true.

What

What induces me to appear in publick upon this Occasion, is, that I may contribute my Share (whatever it be) towards a Work which Providence seems to design for the Lot and Portion of our Days; the opening and commencing at least the Cause of Truth; tho' I fear the full Triumphs of it must be reserv'd for the Labours of Times yet to come; and this, I hope, in some degree I have accomplish'd, by laying open the Falsities whereon our present and late Misunderstandings and Misfortunes were first grafted, and afterwards flourish'd; and having thereby attempted to free these Nations from that Bondage both of thinking and acting, which for many Years past, has, most shamefully, been forc'd upon them: Nor cou'd I forbear treating this Subject in the Manner I do, (however trite or tiresome any one may imagine it to be) because I daily bear the same Things urg'd with the old Invidiousness and ill Design; and because (without the Spirit of Prophecy) one may foretell they will again be put in Practice, by their Favourers, on the first fresh Occasion, in hopes of better Success; and therefore it cannot be amiss to prepare the Remedy against any Time wherein

wherein the same Wounds shall afflict our Nations, and her Enemies, by the same Instruments, shall make her bleed anew.

If any one shall think I favour our Protestant Dissenters too much, I would have him to understand, that no more is design'd them in the following Book, than what they ought to enjoy as they are Men and Protestants; and to observe, that I freely own my self amongst the Number of those who conceive the Cry of Danger from that Side to be entirely artful and false, it being morally impossible that Presbytery in the Church, and a Common-wealth in the State, should ever be Establish'd in England.

There was a Time when these Things had their only Chance, [in the Troubles of 1641, &c.] and yet nothing clear and permanent of this Sort appear'd, during the continual Changes, which then happen'd, for several Years together. No one can say that such a Design was form'd at the beginning of those Troubles; and I am sure every one may safely affirm, that those vast Fermentations and Convulsions cou'd produce nothing at last but the Restoration of the old Constitution; many Forms of Settlements having been attempt-
ed,

The P R E F A C E. ix

ed, but all in vain ; a better than the old one, and the present, not having been devis'd in near 6000 Years ; no, nor being likely to be devis'd in 60000 more : Wherefore this must and will prevail.

As to the present pretended fear of Presbytery in particular, it is so groundless, that truly speaking, most of our Protestant Dissenters are mere Independents ; every Teacher is sole Director ; the particular Congregations choose him, and he and they observe a sort of Church-Power together, Excommunicate one another, &c. without a Thought of Conventions, Synods, or the like general Power of a conven'd Clergy to exercise Church-Government and Authority amongst them : And how soon such a Ministration would decay and vanish, any Man, that thinks, may tell, wou'd the Members of the Establish'd Church but once overlook and neglect the Humour of these private Meetings, wou'd they but seldom mention them, or their Affairs ; or, when they did, if it was always done in a good-natur'd and charitable Way.

I cannot forbear insisting thus long on this Subject, that People may (if possible) be convinc'd

a vinc'd

vinc'd of the Fallacy of spiriting up a Danger from Men and Things, which have no Weight or Interest in themselves, no Strength from their own Nature to buoy or keep them up, or which have not any reasonable Support or Credit from without; neither from domestick or foreign Power and Force; and that I may inculcate over and over, that this is all Artifice and Cheat, fomented and kept warm from a Third Hand; real Popery designing to stalk in upon us, under the Shadow and Appearance of Presbytery and a Common-wealth; and these Things I hope will fully be made to appear in the following Discourse.

I have dealt so very freely with those Clergymen whose Sermons in the Pulpits, and Discourse and Actions in Conversation, or elsewhere have favour'd the Pretender's Title and Interest, that I am obliged here to declare once for all, that these Men, strictly taken, are the only Clergymen pointed at in the ensuing Papers. Those who are not, or were not guilty, are far from being accus'd by me; and those who are, or have been guilty, these are the very Men I arraign and condemn. Many, I am satisfied, of this Sort can be produc'd, pray God the

Num.

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Number may lessen Day by Day; but the Body of the Clergy, I never yet intended, or thought of in this Matter.

I have the Honour to be of that Order myself, and know several, God be thanked, who acted a quite different Part; for very many of whom I can affirm (as I do for myself) that they are as truly affected to our English Constitution, and better Friends to the true Church and State of England, than the highest and most rigid of their Brethren.

I must add at last, that if we are now, or soon may become in Danger of any new Confusions, they only can arise from that base Defection and Rage which at present infests and infatuates some of those Men, who by long, honest, hazardous, and successful Struggles having defeated every thing that cou'd disturb or overturn our happy Constitution, having vanquish'd the common Enemy, most monstrously, without any Reason, are become Enemies to, and quarrel with their Fellow-Conquerors and Friends.

*Had one from the Dead, a few Years since, prophesy'd this, I shou'd have pronounc'd his Predictions false and impossible; wondering
what*

what Evil Spirit influences Men (the common Passions of Mankind being unequal to this Work) to turn APOSTATES from honest Principles; Principles which have actuated them for Years, for a whole Life together; especially after the severest Sufferings for these Principles in Time past, and the Enjoyment now of all the happy Consequences they ever expected from them, their Religion, their Liberties, their Laws, the Protestant Succession, and the most desirable of all Princes at the Head of it; a Prince, much too good and indulgent for such ingrateful Subjects. To pray for whom, that every thing happy and prosperous may attend him, in a long and healthful Life, to wish continual Success to him and his Affairs, and that Disgrace and Disappointment (at least) may be the Portion of his Enemies, is the Interest and Duty of every true Briton, and cannot fail to carry its own Accomplishment and Reward along with it; this being visibly grateful and pleasing to God, and the Designs of his Providence in these Nations.



INTRODUCTION.



Notwithstanding the known Difficulties which attend Persons who write concerning any Publick Transactions of their own Times : Such *Writers* being Subject to the inevitable Calumny and Reproach of serving the Designs of some particular Party of Men, of being either Flatterers or Detractors, of wilful Omissions, unfair Enlargements, or, it may be, Prevarication it self : And their *Work* being expos'd to Censure, Contradiction, and that languishment of Reading, if not entire Dislike, which ever arises from the Knowledge and Acquaintance that every Reader is supposed, in some measure, to have of the Contents of it beforehand. Notwithstanding all this, and whatever else may be said either

B

against

against me, or what I here present to the World; I am resolv'd to go thro' and sustain it after the best Manner I am able, and will give this as a Reason for so doing, That I write directly from my Heart and Conscience, without any Expectation of present Rewards, and without any Attachment to the Persons of Men: And this, I hope, will induce the Candid of all Sorts, with good Nature to peruse what here I offer to their Consideration, and will excuse the Insufficiency of the Performance, because of the Honesty and Usefulness that are intended by it. There is no avoiding Perswasion, when a Man has thoroughly examin'd an Affair; nor can he forbear determining, upon full Evidence, on both Sides of a Question. This I protest to be sincerely my Case in all the Variety of the ensuing Argumentations; and having never observ'd hitherto that right Justice has been done, either to the Things I write of, or to the Men I shall hereafter mention, I thought it my Duty to publish my Sentiments about them to the World in the clearest and strongest Lights that I am Master of: Setting myself about this Work for this last Reason above all, That I may endeavour to unprejudice the misguided Populace of these Islands, by that very familiar and uncover'd Manner wherein I treat it; and that I may contribute towards the Quietness of these Kingdoms, and the peaceable Reign of his present Majesty and his Successors, as well as that due

Gra-

Introduction.

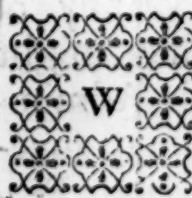
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Gratulations and Praises may be more universally (than hitherto) paid to the confess'd Providence of Almighty God, which made miraculous Steps for the *Introduction* of the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of *Hannover*; and which, by many wondrous and amazing Incidents, prevented the *Dispossession* of it, when it had taken place.

C H A P. I.

S E C T. I.

Heinousness of the Rebellion.

 E may consult the Histories of Rebellions in the several Kingdoms of the World, till our Industry and Curiosity are tired; we may trace them to their Original, and entertain our Hours in perusing the Methods whereby they were at first fomented, and afterwards brought to Maturity: And this if we do, and much more, if we behold their Events, and view them in their Consequences, there are none of them (no! not our own) which can parallel this last in *Great Britain*, for the Extravagancy of Principle whereon it was built; the Unaccountableness of that Delusion whereby it was carried on; and which, by the Artifice of a few, spread itself thro' the greatest Part of the Populace; and for the speedy Reduction and Disappearance of it, though

it had been long concerted, was deeply laid, and appear'd most formidable at the beginning Men formerly rose and took up Arms in, Defence of their Country or Religion : and, to sustain themselves, confederated with others of the same Interest and Principle, with Allies and Friends to the Constitution of their Nation : But our late Rebels acted the very Reverse of all this ; for *Englishmen* and *Protestants* arm'd themselves to the certain Destruction of both those Privileges ; and join'd with every sworn Enemy to the happy Establishment of their Native Land*. When Men formerly rais'd civil Commotions at Home, it was generally to defend themselves against the lawless Power and Tyranny of their Prince or Governours, that they might either bring them to Reason in their Administration, or, by displacing them, raise to sovereign Power the next qualify'd Person or Persons ; such as were capable and inclinable to do 'em Good ; and such as by Birth, or otherways, were entitled to the Royal Dignities and Honours of the Kingdom : But, in Contradiction to all this, and to shew how nationally Mad it is possible for a People to become, Men in our Days have array'd themselves in Arms against the Mildest of Princes, ruling strictly according to the Letter of the Law ; and have

* Irish Papists, Scotch Highlanders, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Italians, and Foreigners of many Nations, who thro' zeal for Rome, or thro' Indigency and Want, list'd to set a Popish Pretender on the Throne of England.

rais'd Tumult and War in the Midst of Peace, universal Prosperity, and the greatest Liberty and Freedom that Subjects can endure, or wish for: So that our Posterity (amongst the Miracles of Time) will have it to say, That they had Ancestors in such a Year, who (when a Free People) could, and did Rebel, to make themselves Slaves; some of whom hazarded, others lost their Lives, in striving to reduce themselves and their Survivors to a political State and Condition worse than Death itself; and who endeavour'd to dethrone a Prince, by Birth entitl'd, and by Education fitted, to their Constitution; in order to bring in another, whose Title the first Way was disputed by some, deny'd by many; but who, by the latter, was a sworn Enemy to every Thing that is *English* and *Reformed*. In short, *Protestant* Subjects then rebell'd, to bring in a *Papish* Governour, (tho' they knew him to be a Bigot in that Religion, not even pretending to make the least Terms and Conditions for what they wou'd be thought to Fight for; a Free Nation engaged in a Civil War, to be govern'd by an arbitrary Prince: and they, who shared in making their own Laws, fighting to resign this Priviledge to him, whose sole Will must ever have been a Law unto them. One Thing indeed the *Leaders* of these Men had in View, which was common with this and other Rebellions, and that was, from blackening the Lawful Government at first by the wildest, falsest of Inventions, and by Terms fitted

fitted and calculated to this peculiar Season of Sedition ; and then from raising the Voice of the Multitude into Murmurs and Complaints afterwards , till by degrees the Trumpet came to be loudly blown, and we fell a Prey to the most open Acts of Hostility and Rebellion, to enrich and aggrandize themselves amidst universal Confusions, and to raise their own Families and Fortunes out of the publick Ruine of their Country.

S E C T. II.

What moved the Protestants, who headed the Faction, to go into Measures which favour'd the Pretender.

AS to profess'd *Papists*, what mov'd them to act their Share in this Rebellion, and what they expected for their Labour, the meanest Capacity can give an Account of ; and therefore one can't but allow, that the only true Cause which engag'd the *Heads* of our *British Protestants*, and many of their chief Followers, in this monstrous Undertaking, was nothing but the Expectation of becoming *Rich*, and *Powerful* and *Great* ; for I shall shew what won the unthinking † Multitude, before I conclude this Discourse.

HENCE the Malecontents amongst the *Laity* bluster'd under the awful Umbrage of

† Mob was the Word in Use at this time, and Mobbing a Thing which was of the last great Use to this base Set of Men.

the *Church*, and distinguish'd themselves into the Affections of the People by the specious Appearance of being Her Preservers and Supporters: And many of the *Clergy*, on the other Hand, most gratefully return'd the Compliment, representing those Persons as fittest to fill the Civil Offices of State who took such extraordinary Care in maintaining the Rights and Privileges of the *Church*. But alas! these mutual good Offices, this plausible Association for the Benefit of the Kingdom, was all Hypocrisy and Cheat; for the better Part of the *Clergy* knew that the *Church of England* cou'd not be in any *Danger*, but from that *Popery* which then thicken'd in upon us by the Collusion now mention'd, the *House of Hannover* being bred to a *Protestant, Episcopal Church*, and having no Security for their Continuance here, but an inviolable Preservation of the *Church of England* upon those very Terms whereon they found it fix'd at their Accession to the Throne; and the better Part both of the *Clergy* and *Laity* knew, that the Leaders of these wicked Men were bred up in those very Principles, and had early abetted that very Party from whence this imaginary pretended Danger was to come; They knew that so little was their true concern either for the establish'd Church or State, or indeed for any Religion, or Good Principles at all, that these Men would, and did expose these Things, *viz.* their *English* Liberties and Privileges both Sacred and Civil, to the Management of an enraged Stranger,

Stranger, * in whom there could be no Inclination, from any one reason, to preserve 'em, and who was incapable of any greater Merit than to deface and destroy 'em : Thus when a sufficient Number of the Clergy and Laity were deceiv'd, and hood-wink'd into the common Delusion, and had deceiv'd and hood-wink'd others agen for a considerable time, then was the Loose at once given to Revenge, Ambition, and Interest, and *down*, just down had tumbled every thing that was Free, every thing that was Protestant in the Land, had not Providence wonderfully interpos'd.

S E C T. III.

Their Fallacy further set forth.

I Have promis'd a particular Detail of the general Arguments whereby the Multitude was deceiv'd into so great an Absurdity, that they rebell'd to bring that thing to pass, for the avoiding of which they had been so artfully, so cunningly taught to Rebel ; *viz.* The total Eversion and Ruin of the *Brittish* Constitution , but I cannot in the mean time conceal that their Leaders were free, and void of every Principle, but *Hypocrisy*, and a Desire of being Rich and Great, of pleasing Themselves, tho' the World was shaking to pieces, and perishing about them : For, as to the real Things which were pretended only in this Con-

† Being a bigotted Papist himself, and his Father and He being benished by the Members of the Church of England.

troverſy ;

troverſy ; viz. The Security of the Religion and Liberties of the People on one hand, and the Power of the Prince, and the Priesthood on the other ; The two latter being ſtrain'd and ſcrew'd up to a monſtrous height, to ſuit the Genius of the Times : And the former being either overlook'd, or quite funk and loſt, in the warm Regards that were, with great Induſtry, paid to the others, as including the Safety of the whole : and all theſe and every thing elſe being wrap'd up in Artifice and Guile, Men telling you the impoſſibility of thoſe frightful Conſequences, which at the ſame time were as viſible as that the Actors themſelves were then above Ground ; I ſay, theſe real Cauſes, that were alledg'd for the Tranſactions of thoſe Times, were ſo little at the Hearts of theſe Men who tranſacted them, and the Miſchiefs reſulting from theſe Actions ſo unavoidable, ſo glaring and diſcernable, that no Character can be drawn black enough, no Punishment devis'd equal to their Crimes, who for private Ends, could allow themſelves to Cheat, Deſtroy, and Undo their Country ; and who, tho' they enjoy'd all that happy and ſatiſfied Men, cou'd even wiſh for under King George : deep Quietneſs, ſolid Peace, their Lives, their Eſtates, their Liberties, their Church, and were depriv'd only of that Power which they had abus'd, and thoſe Places which they knew they did not Deſerve ; wou'd nevertheless for theſe Things, and theſe alone, break thro'

the most sacred Ties of repeated Oaths, raise their Countrymen into Unsettledness, Faction and Rebellion, and rather than not be employ'd in Publick Managements, employ themselves in Things of publick Confusion and Disorder.

SECT. IV.

Shewing how they would have been disappointed had they succeeded.

BUT alas ! What is the true Construction of all this ? It is that Passion so blinded these Men, that they were not able to see through the whole of that Melancholly Affair, wherein they were engag'd. For questionless, Success to them cou'd (at last) produce nothing less than an entire change of the very Nature of every thing that was *English* in the Land ; and must of Necessity reduce all *Brittain* to a Popish, and a foreign Appearance. 'Twou'd have been impossible for them to have stop'd when once they and their Prince had in earnest begun ; and every Knee must certainly either have bow'd to the whole Service of the new Idol, or have liv'd in continual Trembling, Disgrace and Despair. A sad Dilemma ! the best Part of which must conclude in Sorrow and Shame. For what Pain had not such Men endur'd ? what Racks had they not undergone (even supposing they had reconcil'd themselves to every new Method) from the Officiousness, and Insolence of crowding) but
Po-

Popish) Foreigners? whose superior Merits, earlier Services, and heavier Sufferings for the injur'd Prince would quite out-balance and obliterate the late Domestick Torments of Perjury and a seditious Temper, and wou'd cancel all the Obligations a plain Englishman had laid on his Unfortunate Sovereign, by drudging on in the meritorious Way of a Male-content, and so venturing Poverty and Death, for many Years together.—— In short, Reason cannot but tell them, that the *Pretender* is so loaded with irresistible Demands from various Strangers, (many of whom make the first Figure amongst Men,) that all the Posts, Civil, Ecclesiastical and Military; all his new Impositions on the Subject; all the Old and Legal Revenues of the Kingdom (shou'd he ever be settled amongst us) will never be able to answer the Ambition or Wants of his numerous Patrons and Followers; our Nation would be the Sink of many other Kingdoms; our Natives every moment overlook'd, affronted, despis'd; Carefs'd at first, but at length entirely discarded and laid aside: Till, wearied with Bigottry and Superstition, harass'd with Subjection and Disappointment, disgusted with strange Manners and Usages, and continually insulted by Upstart Aliens: From Languishing and Repining, they'd agen turn down-right Rebels, and endeavour by a second Civil War to free themselves from that very State of Things, to introduce which they had perjur'd themselves, and thought it con-

venient to raise Intestine Commotions (even to Blood) before. But ! who knows whether Lawful resistance now wou'd be able to take Place, after long Possession, and large Triumphs of Successful Rebellions ?

C H A P. II.

Wherein are particularly Display'd, the false Arguments whereby the Leaders persuaded the Multitude to fall into those Measures which ended in Rebellion.

HAVING given so Black an Account of the Leaders of this Mottly Insurrection ; it may very well be expected (and may not be unworthy the Reader's perusal) that some Enlargement be made on the Reasons which induc'd so many of the common People to fall in with Measures destructive of their Religion and Liberties ; and to expose in a plain Light that finish'd Degree of Artifice, which intercepted their Discernment of the infamous and execrable Designs of those who had Power enough with them, (implicitly) to engage 'em in Things most impious and wrong, and which manifestly tended to their own undoing.

S E C T. I.

*Touching the Artifice of Leaders of Parties, &c.
in general.*

WHATEVER Complaints are made by Divines and Moralists of the natural Declivity and Viciousness of Human Nature in General: We may observe that the Wickedness of particular Bodies of Men (consider'd as such) is frequently owing to the Influence of a few; concerning the Excellence of whose Understanding, or Rectitude of whose Will the Multitude are prejudic'd on the favourable Side; or whose Eminence of Birth, and Advantages of Experience, Education or Fortune gives them an immediate Awe or Command over such whose very Dependance on the others sets them in the Light of Gods and Benefactors, and consequently points them out as Directors and Guides to their Thoughts, as well as their Actions. Upon this Footing it is, that we never read of any publick spirited or enterprizing Men who were inclin'd to do any great Actions, and to set themselves at the Head of remarkable Revolutions or Changes, such as founding, altering or annihilating Governments, enslaving or freeing of Nations, introducing or abolishing a Religion; commencing War, or making Peace: But that they temper'd themselves and their Actions sometime before hand, with peculiar Turns of Distinction and Observation till at last

last they spoke out, and established some particular Principle on which to fix all the Thoughts of their Assistants, and which alone shou'd inspirit them in the whole Course of their Attempts, and struggle to accomplish their Ends.

S E C T. II.

Exhibiting an Example from ancient Rome, &c.

THUS when the *Roman* King * was inclin'd to establish a *Religion*, he feigned a frequent Congress with a † *Goddeſs* in secret, whereby having confirm'd the Opinion of invisible Beings he carry'd himself safe thro' all the Parts and Ceremonies of the Worship of the Gods: obtaining hereby what Superstitions he pleas'd towards them, as well as Obedience to the State, and Morality towards Men.

Thus also when *Rome* grew weary of her Kings, the glorious Consul gave out *Liberty* for the Word, and thereby inflam'd some, and animated others to that Height of Heroism which was wanted to make it a free and flourishing Commonwealth.

THE Glory of Arms and *Military* Atchievements succeeded Liberty: Civilizing Nations and being Lovers and Benefactors of Mankind at other Times buoy'd up the *Roman*

* Numa.

† Egeria.

Genius to successful Labours and Toil in War: Their * Gods and Families, Religion and Liberty in modern Language was the Trumpet blown to their Fleets and Armies: Till at length 'twas thought enough to inspire 'em with Honour and Courage, to incite 'em to the greatest military Hardships and Glory, and to induce them to undertake whatever advanc'd the Name and Dignity of their Government, to render 'em valiant and virtuous, and all that is laudable and good, by telling a Man that he was a *Roman*.

NOR was it less customary in other Nations to enliven their Votaries and Subjects to the boldest and noblest of Actions by applying the Idea of all that is honourable and Praise-worthy to some remarkable Terms of Art, and impressing them strongly on the Imagination of the Instruments of their Schemes.

To pass by any more Examples, for they are numerous in History, 'twas to this was owing in a great Measure the Defeat of the Army and Destruction of the Cause of one of our own Monarchs † by the Hands of violent Rebels, headed by a celebrated but infamous ||Usurper: and I doubt not but all that

* Pro Aris & focis.

† King Charles I.

|| Oliver Cromwel; who at first observing his Forces to be generally worsted, resolv'd his ill Fortune into the Principles which animated the King's Army, viz. Monarchy and Episcopacy, to countervail which, he successfully actuated his Men with the appellation of Saints, and the Imagination that they immediately fought for the Grace and Favour of God.

Life and Vigour, that Joy in Arms and those successful glorious Campaigns wherewith Providence of late Years permitted our *English* Soldiery to be bless'd, and which dispirited the Minds of our vaunting and vanquish'd Enemies, was owing to the noble Principles of our glorious * General, as well as to his inimitable Skill and Conduct in Military Actions, and the Example of his Bravery and Courage. The *Liberty* of his Country, and Success of the *Protestant* Cause, being Things so virtuous, so exalted in their own Nature, and so firmly fix'd in his Heart, that his Army wanted only to regard what it was which invigorated him, wanted no Motive but this to conquer and defeat that Man, who, with too assuming an Emphasis stil'd himself *Great*; and who proudly once declar'd War, (tho' then and ever unsuccessful thro' the Iniquity of his Cause) only for the Glory of his Army.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on this Subject because Posterity will never be able to make a right Judgment of the Times wherein we live, without being appriz'd that the general Taste, and publick Disposition of Mens Minds, was so whimsical and depraved, that they could not bear with any thing that was real, or which carried its own Assent strongly along with it: But that Appearances, nay Falsity it self, and

* *Duke of Marlborough.*

down right Contradictions and Lies were the
 Favourites that perswaded and brought them
 into every Measure they took. And indeed
 it is the undeniable Character of most *Britons*
 in this Age, that they first possess'd themselves
 of imaginary and romantick Principles, and
 then proceeded to Actions as wild and extra-
 vagant as the Grounds whereon they were
 built; neglecting and despising all that was
 solidly true and glorious in it self, every thing
 which would really make them easie and hap-
 py, and entertaining Error and Slavery in
 their Place. Hence it was, no doubt, that all
 the Parts of this Rebellion, tho' never so much
 labour'd and studied, when they came to be
 put together and brought into Use, dissolv'd
 and died away almost of themselves. For the
Truth was against these People, and their
 fantastick Opinions of the Power and Title of
 the Pretender, or of any better Title, or more
 Power, than the Laws of the Land consent to
 and establish, and their Chimeras of the same
 things (when not to be found in Scripture)
 being lodg'd as inviolably in the Clergy; and
 that therefore the whole Constitution sacred
 and Civil was near expiring from the Preva-
 lency of those who didn't think exactly on
 these Subjects as they themselves did; I say,
 when these Dreams of Opinion came to the
 Test, and Mens Hearts and Hands were to
 try on which Side the real Argument lay;
 all the Imposture fail'd, and melted into a to-

tal Rendition of it self to a stronger and honest Power; and Freedom from Tyranny both in Church and State, and a Protestant Successor to obtain and preserve these two great Ends, this bore down all, and for ever will continue to bear down all before it.

S E C T. III.

The Danger of the Church, the Grand Artifice and Party-Word of the Faction.

IT is observable, that tho' the People were ready to give up their Liberty to the State, as well as their Consciences to the Church, and that therefore both Church and State were most cunningly said to be in Danger from those Men, who set up for a Freedom from the Impositions of either: yet it was thought too impolitick to cry out publicly for the Danger of the latter, the Words *Liberty* and *Freedom* being ever ready to stop their Mouths who argued this Way; for which Reason the lasting Prevalent Cant-Word, whereby the whole Spirit of the Party was sustain'd, and which to this Day isn't quite extinct, was *THE DANGER OF THE CHURCH*: An Expression indefinite, and to which no one, real, determin'd Idea was ever yet fix'd; and which, thro' its Ambiguity and plausible Sound, was wisely calculated and as exactly answer'd the Designs of the first Inventors of it.

THE

THE Falsity of this Affirmation, *The Church is in Danger*, has, in some Degree, already, and will more clearly appear in the Pursuit of this Discourse: For, if the utter abolishing of the Gospel in these Realms be meant by this Phrase, this I suppose is so glaring a Piece of Effrontery, so bald an Imposition that it carries its own Answer along with it; it being morally impossible that Atheism and Infidelity tho' much complain'd on, and not without some Reason, shou'd utterly usurp upon the Christian Faith, and bear down all Religion and Divine Worship before it. Not that I wou'd have my Readers ignorant that there wanted not some Men, designing and wicked enough to send the Expression abroad on this very Errand, nor others credulous and foolish enough to embrace and believe it. Whereas alas! this Complaint ever has, and ever will be the sad Fate of hapless Mankind in all Ages and Kingdoms of the Earth, till a little before the last Dissolution and the general Consummation of all Things: Till which Time Providence permits Things to go on in their natural Course; and the Power of Darknes and the Wickedness of Men, no doubt, till that Time (to speak in the Scripture-Phrase) * lets, and lets, and will lett.

'Twou'd be tedious, on this Head, to give but a small Sketch of this antient Outcry,

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since

* 2 *Thess.* ii. 7.

since any Oeconomy and Morality was pretended to amongst Men. Let us look where we will, and at what Time we please, and we shall be furnished with Examples of this sort: The Moralist as well as Divine ever labouring to recommend Vertue and Religion, ever complaining of the Wickedness of their Times, and representing from thence the Danger there was lest the Worship of the Gods, lest Justice and Honesty amongst Men shou'd take their last Flight, and be entirely swept away from the Face of the Earth: And indeed such an Undertaking would be odious and ungrateful as well as needless; witness that wretched Collection of Sin and Wickedness, produc'd not long since to skreen a * Person impeach'd by the Commons of *England*, and found guilty by the Lords, of High Crimes and Misdemeanours. A Collection! vile and horrid, and fit only to appear in that Light, wherein, by Voice of publick Authority it was afterwards order'd to be burn'd. However, tho' I am unwilling to shew the Insignificancy of this Plea, to the Purposes it was produc'd, by running thro' the Deformities and offensive Parts of History, yet I can't forbear remarking that in *Popish* Countries, the same Language, on the same Occasion, and at the same Time was hotly and loudly made use on: The *Church of Rome*, and other *Popish* Churches being then complain'd of publickly by the Pope, &c. to be in Danger, not only from the
Wick-

* *Dr. Sacheverel.*

Wickedness of the People, but from their Tendency to embrace new *Doctrines and Opinions.

AND that Men may be fully perswaded that this Party-Phrase in *England*, was only artful and entirely false: I beg Leave to let them know, that during the whole Time that it was entertain'd with Credit and Affection, most wholsom and powerful Laws were in Force against all Manner of Immorality, Profaness and Vice; Religion and the establish'd Church were fenc'd impreguably, and secur'd by the strongest Barriers that the whole Legislature could provide for them. The present Prince was celebrated for Vertue and Protestantism; and the Crown firmly settled on a Reform'd Posterity. There was not one Attempt made either in publick or private to attack these Laws; no Motion in either House of Parliament, no Suspicion from the Queen, and indeed no Grounds of Suspicion from any other Quarter; unless from a few insignificant circumforaneous Scriblers; their Names known and of no Influence, but on some unregarded Libertine and licentious Youths, with which sort of Men, *London* and *England* not only, but all Countries of our Globe will for ever be infected. I cannot conclude this Subject without informing my Reader, that this Insinuation of these wicked Men was so groundless, that Religion

* *The Pope publish'd a Letter at this Time exhorting the Clergy to watch against Socinianism, Jansenism, &c. which he complain'd were very much encouraged in France, Italy, and other Popish Nations.*

gion at this Time really made a conspicuous and shining Figure amongst us. We were bless'd with a Set of learned, honest and pious Bishops. The inferiour Clergy were numerous, orthodox, and unmolested in their spiritual Exercises and Temporal Provisions. The Churches were throng'd; the Altars frequented; and such amiable Marks of publick Charity erected, countenanc'd and unmolested in almost every Town and City in the whole Kingdom, besides the private Observances of this Duty, as is the peculiar Glory of *England*, and which by the Permission of God, will, I hope, cover many of our melancholy National Sins.

S E C T. IV.

The Falsity of the General Assertion of the Danger of the Church, applied to the Church of England, in particular.

WHAT has been said of this fallacy of the Danger of the Church, as it regards the Gospel of Christ and Religion in general, will illustrate the same Cheat, with respect to what is call'd the Church of *England*, in particular; that is, those *Articles, Canons, Rubrics, and Directories*, &c. which the Laws of the Land establish as the *Modus* of Faith and Worship to all who are inclin'd to believe and conform to 'em in the Kingdom of *England*. Now, that these were in no Danger, is plain, because, the *Laws*, which give them their National Sanction, and from whence alone

alone they derive the Authority of an *Eng-
lish* Compiement, for Décency and Order in
the Publick Worship of God, and the good
edifying of his People, were in full force and
vigour on their Side, all this time, and not
one Syllable ever mutter'd of any Danger
that those Laws would be Violated or Re-
peal'd. How then cou'd the Church be in
Danger, when the Laws which had appoint-
ed that such a Church should first *Be*, and which
supported It when in Being, were in no Dan-
ger themselves? No Populace being either
Inclinable or Able to over-power the Le-
gislation, and to abolish these Things by Vi-
olence; and the Legislature being free from
a Suspicion of any such Designs; nay, on the
Contrary, both these being perfectly dispos'd
to favour this Church.

In vain therefore was this Out-cry rais'd
(excepting the Advantage of a Temporary Im-
position on some weak and wicked People)
whilst every antient Law that favour'd the
Church remain'd unattempted and quiet:
had it not been so, the true Phrase ought to
have been not that the Church, but those
Laws which protect'd the Church were in Dan-
ger of being violated or repealed: For I shall
plainly shew hereafter, that the Repealing a
particular Law or two relating to Protestant
Dissenters wou'd have been, and still will
be for the Honour and Safety of the Church.
But this they knew to be too plain an Un-
truth

truth to be receiv'd : Or, had there been a Pretence for it, no Phrase on this Side, could possibly have serv'd the Turn. No ! The Word *Church* was what had been long and warmly beaten into the Minds of the People, and the unintelligible Averrment of the Danger of that, Cou'd only be sufficient and powerful enough to make Men run Mad, and to undo themselves and their Country upon unexamin'd Delusions and Vagaries----and Mad undoubtedly they were, who cou'd not see, that, to make up this Proposition and constitute the Truth of it, *viz. The Church is in Danger*, the Laws which authoriz'd the Appointment of such a Church, and maintain'd it (both being now incorporate) must be in Danger also ; *i. e.* The whole Legislature (the Prince particularly) must be in Danger ; the Prince, who is Head, Protector and Governour of it ; which Things most certainly, were not so.

BUT the Truth is, the People were not treated at so plain and explicite a rate, and a great Majority of the Multitude understood this Phrase in both the Senses now mention'd, being moreover with great Industry taught by the same Hands to lament that the Persons and Characters of the Clergy grew into Contempt and Disregard every Day : and that their Power and Authority was visibly lessening and expiring : And this compleated the Notion of the Church's Danger.

S E C T. V.

*The Danger of the Church consider'd, in respect to
the Contempt of the Clergy.*

IT would be a very notorious Falsity, to deny that this was the Case of a great many Clergymen at that Time: and would be as partial and unfair, in a Person enter'd thus far into this Subject, not to give the honestest and truest Account of this Matter, that Observation or Industry can make one Master of. To set this Affair in the clearest Light, I cannot forbear mentioning that the Kingdom of *England* at this Time, was perfectly divided into Two * Parties; One whereof espous'd the Succession of the House of *Hanover*: the Other the Interest of the pretended Son of King *James* the II^d. The former, generally speaking, piqu'd themselves for moderate Principles in Church and State: The latter carry'd the Prerogative of the Crown to its greatest Altitude, and rigidly insisted on the Title of Our Prince, to be Hereditary and Lineal alone; maintaining at the same Time the strictest Superiority and Power in the Clergy, which cou'd be consistent with the Appearance of any Reformation from *Rome*.

It will be no Discovery to let you know, that a great Part of the Clergy did mighty Ser-

* Whigg and Tory.

vice to this last Set of Men, by advancing both from Prefs and Pulpit, that Sacredness of Inheritance which Birth convey'd to a Prince, and that unlimited Obedience which Scripture (as they wrongly imagin'd) without any Exceptions demanded of the Subject; very willingly making use of the present good Dispositions of the People towards their Order, in Hopes by this Means thoroughly to establish that absolute Authority and Power over the Laity, which (tho' so agreeable to themselves) many *English* Subjects oppos'd with utmost Industry and Vehemence. And although there wanted not many amongst the Priesthood, who were of the moderate Side, yet the far greatest Number of them acted a quite different Part, and, besides the political Notions, which I have mention'd, busied themselves very much in advancing Spiritual Doctrines of the same Tendency and Design.

Confession and Absolution sometimes made their Figure amongst Us in the same Shape wherein they appear in Popish Countries; the Nature of Schism was carry'd so far at another Time, that all Toleration was render'd ridiculous and useless, and then we know what * Opinion must have step'd into its Place. The Power of the Keys enjoy'd all its Terrors; and to remove the highest † Mountain which lay in the Way of our new Accommodation, the Sa-

* *Persecution.* † *Transubstantiation.*

crifice of the Sacrament, was to be the common Expression in use amongst Us ; and thus Idolatry and Contradiction were to be lost and swallow'd up in the Softness of Words, which wou'd have left Men at Liberty to fix what Idea they pleas'd unto them.

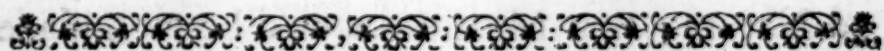
When this High-flown Part of the Clergy had thus array'd themselves in all the gawdy and Party-colour'd Garbs of the Sanctuary, and had perswaded the People of the Beauty and Usefulness of them, 'twas then easy to find every particular Account, which the general Cry of *The Danger of the Church*, was contriv'd to produce, and to extract daily Advantages from it, amongst the Vulgar. And indeed it came to that odious Pass at last, that one cou'dn't mention the most indifferent Action (tho' never so justly) which disfavoured a Clergyman, but straitway you were bully'd by *The Danger of the Church*: And therefore you may easily guess how loud the Language was rais'd, against those Persons that dar'd at such a Juncture as this, publickly to oppose the Doctrines now recited, or to resent that barefac'd Trumpeting of Rebellion, and favouring the *Pretender*, which is too well known to have been frequently advanc'd and impress'd upon the People.

Whilst Things were in this Condition, there were not wanting Numbers of Foreign Popish Priests, and other Emissaries from Abroad, who joyn'd with the Cry in Vogue, and by various Artifices helped on the Warm Part of the Cler-

gy to bustle in Vindication of their own and the decaying Cause of the Church, and egg'd the exasperated Multitude into Rage and Flame, to the same Purposes and Ends ; till Things were carry'd to such an Height, that a Dormant Set of * Men, who imagin'd themselves the Chief Persons to be consider'd and employ'd, whenever the long wish'd-for Season offer'd itself, at once spake out, and thought it a Time not only to advance the Title of their † King to our Crown, but to prefer their own Title to the Priesthood, to any other in these Realms, nay to exclude all such Clergymen, whether Bishop, Priest or Deacon, from Holy Orders, as well as any Temporal Encouragements in the Church, who either took their Order, or receiv'd Benefices without that Lineal Descent of Priesthood, which was deriv'd from the Bishops, made in the Reign of King *James* the II^d, (and upwards) which Ecclesiastical Tenure they affirm'd to be interrupted, from the Time that that King was depos'd for Mal-administration : and that therefore all that has been done this Way, since that Time, by other Hands, was and is Antichristian, and Null and Void in itself. An admirable Instance of Charity ! to fasten the Hopes of Eternal Salvation on Circumstances never to be prov'd, and most certainly Heterodox and untrue. But we know whence this severe and infallible Spi-

* Nonjurors. † *The Pretender*.

rit comes, and must safely conclude against this horrid Doctrine in Favour of the present Members of Our Church, not only, and those who shall come after us, but in Favour also of those Numberless Souls who have gone to the other World, content with the Consecration of those Bishops which King *William* (of glorious Memory) appointed, and with the Administration and Church-Offices of Presbyters ordain'd by them.



C H A P. III.

Treating more particularly of the pretended Reasons for the Cry of The Danger of the Church.

HAVING explain'd these Things after that free and open Manner wherewith they ought to be handled, and I hope with unquestionable Disinterestedness and Integrity: I cannot dismiss this Argument, without taking more particular Notice of Two or Three of the most popular Reasons, which were given out to support the impertinent and vexatious Cry of *The Danger of the Church.*

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

Answering the Objection that the Ministry then in Being, (from the Year 1708 to 10 especially,) and both Houses of Parliament, were known Favourers of Presbytery and a Common-Wealth.

ONE was that the Ministry then in Being, nay, both the Houses of Parliament, were known Favourers of Presbytery and a Common-Wealth, and that manifest Overt-Acts wou'd soon appear of a most dismal and wicked Nature; that Measures wou'd be soon made known, which had been prepar'd to reduce All *Great-Britain* to that Sort of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, whenever the Nation came to be disengag'd from that monstrous Administration which then oppress'd it. And yet when this grand Change happen'd to be made, so little of those pompous Accusations were either pursu'd or prov'd, that it all ended in a false and impotent Attack on the greatest Hero, One of the most deserving * Men that ever supported or retriev'd the Honour of the *English* Nation. An Attack! so shameful, so infamous and unjust, that it ended in the Disgrace and Confusion of those who began it; but which contributes to fill up the Sum of those Glories that render this Great Person admirable and conspicuous, for the most eminent Pas-

* *The Duke of Marlborough.*

five as well as Active Vertues. He who was able to *Do* the noblest and best of Things for his Country, proving able to bear and suffer the worst. But to return. It must be evident, that those Clamours against these Men were invidious and false, not only because nothing like the Crimes laid against them was ever produced or appear'd (tho' by the by, the most flagrant * Villanies have been made good against their Accusors) but because there is not Room even for Suspicion now of the Danger of the same Things, tho' most of the same Men (and Men of their Principles) by the good Providence of God, and Wisdom of His present Majesty, are reposted in their former, or in other Places of publick Employment and Trust; nay one may venture to affirm, that the Church of *England* never yet gloried in truer or abler Friends than King GEORGE and His Ministers; nor ever enjoy'd more settled Peace and Security, or a more beautiful and pleasing Prospect of continuing in the same happy State, than now it does. The Members of it may quarrel, and the Clergy belonging to it may go on to wrangle and dispute; but whilst this Royal Family is the Head and Protectors of it, the Foundation thereof will remain steadfast and sure, and all the ill-contriv'd Superstructure rais'd thereon, by deluded and imposing Per-

* *Witness the late Impeachments, Fines, Prisons, Banishments, nay, Sufferings to Death, which have been the just Fate of some of them and their Friends.*

sons, will tumble and moulder into Silence and Oblivion.

It will be conclusive in this Dispute, I hope, to observe that neither common Sense or Prudence cou'd possibly dictate to Ministers in full Possession of all the Power, Riches and Honour of a Kingdom, to attempt such Fundamental Changes, as must endanger, or entirely ruin both themselves and their Fortunes. This we know has, and may be the Endeavour and Study of Persons out of Place; but the Possessors surely have nothing to do but to maintain themselves, and all Publick Affairs, in the present quiet and prosperous Condition, and to discharge their Duties so wisely and carefully as never to be call'd in question about them.

That nothing lastly may be left unsaid on this Head, it is evident from the List of Both the Houses of that Parliament, that there were not Ten Dissenting Members in them, (except *Scots*) nor above One or Two Common-Wealth's Men, (if any) in the literal Acceptation of that Word. There was indeed a Representation offer'd to the Queen, in Pursuance of the Humour of the Times, by The *Lower-House of Convocation* then sitting, setting forth the dangerous State of Sin and Wickedness which infested the Nation; I shall say no more here of that Representation, than desire my Readers to peruse it, and then they will be able to judge of the Reasonableness of it, and whether any thing that is here said, be an Answer unto it.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

Farther Arguments answer'd for The Danger of the Church, viz. Repealing some Laws and not Enacting others for its Security.

ANother Reason given for *The Danger of the Church*, was that some Laws which might become its Boundaries and Defence were not enacted, and that others which favour'd it, were propos'd to be repeal'd, a Flood-Gate thereby being laid open to Dissenters of all Sorts, to rush in and overwhelm it.

Now in order to discover the Fallacy of this Assertion, and to shew that Party-Cause (not Truth) lay at the Bottom of these Argumentations, it will be a Thing of too narrow a Compass, to fall directly upon the particular Views which those Men had who argu'd this Way; and therefore I beg Leave to commence this Affair from an higher Principle, and to lay it down at first for a general Truth, that whenever the Publick Safety of a State comes to be in Danger, the Difference of Religious Principles in the several Subjects of that State, at such a Juncture, ought not, will not be consider'd, unless those Principles are the very Occasion of that Danger, or wou'd produce a greater Evil than Good, in regard to the present Circumstance of Things; but that All Hands will be called in for the common Safety, whatever Diversities of Sentiments may possess the Minds of Men, in that State, about Religion.

gion and the Worship of God. For, from the Beginning of the World, Men never enter'd into Societies, or form'd themselves into Kingdoms and Governments, because of a Consent and Harmony in Principles of Religion ; but when they became Civil Societies, betook themselves to establish the best religious Principles which they cou'd discover or find out. And this is so true, that you shall always find, that where Mens Interests are the same, they will never break thro' those for Difference in Religion : And, tho' their Religion be the same, yet it is no Bond of Union, where their Interests are divided.

It is here suppos'd that it is impossible, that All the Inhabitants of any Nation, where Liberty of Reasoning and the Benefit of common Sense is left in their Power, can pretend to think the same Way in Matters of Religion, or indeed almost in any thing else: Mens Understandings and Education being so wide and distant one from another, that they wou'd dispute, were it possible, even about the plainest Things ; as I say, it is not to be conceiv'd (under the present Frame and Make of Humane Minds) that ever God Almighty design'd, that, in such and such Tracts of Land, all the People dwelling therein should exactly be of the same Opinions about his Worship and the Affairs of another Life, I am sure Men never were, no not during the very Delivery of Revelation: And as it is impossible to assign any such Infallibility, or to conclude any other-
ways

ways than that we are left to ourselves to form the best Judgment we can, of the Religion of our own and other Kingdoms round about Us; so certainly it is against all Reason (and Revelation) for any Leaders or Governours in any Part of the Earth, to force Men to conform to their Moduses of believing and practising, and to deprive them of the common Benefit of that Country, if they refuse so to do: And much more so, if they go farther, and punish them for not so doing. 'Tis irrational, 'tis cruel that there shou'd be any such Kingdom: Nay, 'tis impossible ever to find One which really succeeds in such a Scheme, notwithstanding the dire Efforts that are made towards it in some Neighbouring Nations, and the horrid Persecutions in use for this End. This being premis'd, that no Men should be oblig'd to think like the rest of their Countrymen, nor be punish'd or excluded the Benefits of their Country, if they did not, provided those Thoughts did not produce Acts which tended to the Subversion of the Establishment of that Country; Our present Question comes into this short Compass, whether the Opinions of Protestant Dissenters be destructive of the Constitution of the Kingdom of *England*? For these were the Men from whom the Church was said to be in Danger, and in regard to whom, the Complaint about Repealing and not Enacting, Laws, was made. And when this Question is answer'd, we may then go farther and determine whether Laws shou'd be made or repeal'd which disfavoured them, and ren-

der them incapable of the common Emoluments of the Nation? For 'tis plain that Opinion in Religion alone, lays their present Incapacity upon them. Whether they shou'd be subject to a Penalty for the external Exercise of those Dissenting Principles in Publick Worship? And whether in time of common Danger, they ought to be entrusted and admitted on a Level with others of His Majesty's loyal Subjects? All these Questions and some more of the same Nature, depend on the Solution of the first, *viz.* whether our Protestant Dissenters hold Opinions destructive of our Constitution? The Question is not whether a Rigid Presbyterian, (suppose) who reckons Episcopacy to be a damnable Sin, wou'd, if he were able, abolish that Order, and establish the Presbyterian in its Room? or, whether a Commonwealth's Man, who is so prejudic'd against Monarchy, as to think it an ungodly Usurpation of One Man over Thousands, wou'd dethrone a King and place the Government in the Hands of a few or many: Such Men there may be, tho' their Number be but small; for I am sure that the Protestant Presbyterian Churches, and Commonwealths Abroad, pay mighty Deference to our Church and State, and entertain no such Damning Principles concerning either our Ecclesiastical or Civil Government: But the Question is, whether our present Protestant Dissenters, tolerated here by that general Name, embrace Principles, destructive of our Constitution? For if they do, no doubt they'll put them

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in Practice whenever they are able; and if they don't, then, whether they are *capable* of being trusted in any Share of the Administration of Civil and Military Affairs; and especially whether they ought to be call'd in to succour and support the whole Constitution at a Time of common Peril and Danger? To avoid being misunderstood in a Place which will be thought to consist of some Tenderness and Nicety, I desire the Reader to remember that I here oppose the Protestant Dissenters to Papists, the latter of which most certainly hold Opinions destructive of our Constitution. I think this Admonition necessary, because People are generally at a Loss on this Subject, for want of distinguishing clearly between our Constitution, and the Laws and Usages of the Land, which are but the Consequence of that Constitution: The Constitution being the Cause, the Laws the Effect; and because the wicked Designs of the Men of those Times which I am speaking of, were very much favour'd by dispersing this artful and invidious Question, whether 'twere better for a Person of the Church of *England*, to become a Papist or a Presbyterian? Insinuating that the former were the most preferable Choice. The Constitution I take to be explain'd in this One Proposition, that all our Laws are to be made by a mix'd Legislature, by King, Lords and Commons; this is the constituted Government of *England*, and whatever Laws these enact and agree on together, must be submitted to as the legal Result of
our

our Constitution. I cannot but think (as I have said before) that the Protestant Dissenters, to a very inconsiderable Number, are vigorous Friends to this Constitution, altho' they may wish that the Powers constituted, wou'd repeal some Laws which they are displeas'd with, or enact others which wou'd be more agreeable to them ; But of these, neither they or any Subject are Judges : The Legislators alone, have the Power of doing any thing this Way. For my Part, I think our Constitution a glorious One, and the Laws built upon it very reasonable and useful. Whatever the Legislators enact, I will obey for Conscience sake ; knowing this to be certainly true, that all Humane Affairs so fluctuate and change, that there never will be either a Constitution, or any Laws devis'd under its Influence, so perfect in themselves, or so adapted to the Genius and Taste of any One Period of Time, as to be secure from Dislike or Abuse. This being premis'd, I hope it may at length be roundly affirm'd, that our Protestant Dissenters hold no Opinions destructive of, or tending to undo our Constitution. Whereas Papists hold and believe every thing that ruins and destroys it ; nay, hold the Necessity of Abolishing most or all of our Laws, Sacred and Civil, which derive their Sanction from that Constitution. They own themselves oblig'd to obey an Hereditary Arbitrary Prince, even tho' he shou'd confound all our Establishment, Laws, Liberties, and Religion ; and they hold the Opinion of a Foreign

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Power's having Authority over our Nation, our King, Laws and People not only, but that he is infallible and can forgive Sins, and therefore they esteem themselves obliged to be ready, whenever he sends them Command, (by Murder, Fire, Sword and War, or by Methods never so inhumane and wicked, to alter or destroy our Constitution, and our Laws Religious and Temporal; and to model them and the Nation according to his sole Direction and Will. A Tryal of which, in One Instance, is now set on Foot in *France* *. To conclude, I don't know any One Man in *England*, who wouldn't alter many Laws in Being, were it in his Power; tho' he may like the Constitution very well, and tho' he prays that no other may ever obtain. The Protestant Dissenters I believe cou'd name a great many of this Sort, the most essential of which, I hope, and am (humanly speaking) sure never will be alter'd; but a Papist wou'd tear up some particular Things, not only, but the whole Foundation of All that is Protestant, *English*, and Free. To come then to the Point in Hand; for my Part, considering the Protestant Dissenters as a Body of Men, in this Kingdom, by all the Observations that I cou'd ever make of them, the previous Question, ought to be given in the Negative; for from the late happy Revolution (in

* The Pope's Bull *Unigenitus*; destructive of the Liberties of the Gallican Church: nobly oppos'd by many Prelates and Inferiour Clergy. God encreate this Spirit.

1688) to this very Day, I find them ever siding with, and abetting the present Constitution whenever it thus came to be attack'd by the common Enemy; and claiming only an Allowance and Toleration under that Constitution as a peaceable People, differing in some Particulars of Church-Government, but content to enjoy those Opinions, and serve God according to them in Quietness, and Ease; without Let to themselves, or Molestation to others. This I take to be the Case of our Protestant Dissenters in General, whatever warm or virulent Expressions some particular Men amongst them have made use on, against the *English* Establishment of Church and State; and as I assure them I am no Friend to their Separation, but think they ought immediately to come in and communicate with us, so I wou'd have all the rest of Mankind know, that I have no Interest or Design to serve, in doing them Justice, by speaking thus fairly about them in every thing else: For I own that I cou'd never see them designing or desirous to take or grasp the whole Government into their own Hands, and I am sure they are not able to sustain it, were it put into their Power. Nay, I am farther very well perswaded, that were they not exasperated, and made more considerable by Opposition than really they are in themselves, (like a Torrent that is damm'd up, which otherways wou'd run in its Natural Course, without Impetuosity or Noise,) I am sure wou'd our establish'd Clergy and other Conformists, either use an intire

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Silence towards them, or else treat them with kind Invitations and tender Expostulations, &c. wou'd they but leave them perfectly to their own Reasonings, we shou'd see that they cou'd not support themselves for ever, on the bare Strength of their own Cause, no! they'd dwindle at last into lesser and lesser Numbers, till the very Name of a Dissenter were quite lost in a long Tract of Time. Experience allows this to be a known Truth, since the Repeal of some Penal Laws made against them; and Reason consents strongly to the Confirmation of it. For 'tis certain that Contradiction and hard Usage, give Life and Nerves to many Sentiments, which otherways wou'd either lie dormant, or else entirely die away. There is a great deal in being thought Somebody: Obstinacy is ever uppermost in an Argument, and Men will never engage with you, or be brought to hear you with any kind Disposition, when they are sure before-hand to be branded either for Fools, or Knaves. Complaisance and good Nature, may win and induce them to enter the Lists, but Railing, Satyrising, nay, * Damning, will never either perswade them to come over at first, or continue them in your Opinion afterwards; and I wish with all my Soul, that every Dissenter in the Kingdom, were appriz'd that no One Pulpit wou'd

* Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon (amongst the rest) on the 5th of November.

ever hereafter be employ'd (as hitherto many have been) against them; but that Christ, and him Crucified, *i. e.* some practical Discourses, shou'd only be deliver'd to the People; and if they or their Cause happen'd to be mention'd, it shou'd be in the Language of Good Nature and Invitation alone, to attend an unblameable Service, and to hear a charitable brotherly Discourse. Certain I am, that such a Compromise, is Christian and Honourable, and that such a Centre of Union as this, is the only one that can be of any present Use; till God, out of his infinite Mercy, by some extraordinary Means, makes us of one Faith and one Worship; which I earnestly pray may be our Fate here in these Kingdoms, long before the End and Consummation of all Things.

S E C T. III.

A Secondary Question about Dissenters.

AS to the latter Questions, Whether when the Church of *England* flourishes, under all its Proprieties and Particularities; and the Civil State is free from any Apprehension of being disturb'd or overturn'd, Men, who will not in every Particular, conform to the first, shou'd too indulgently be brought in to share the Honours and Emoluments of the latter, whilst others may be found who are more capable of such Employments, by giving a total Poof of their sincere Conformity to all the present Laws whatever in Being?

It is plain from Reason and Nature, and I am sure there is nothing reveal'd to the contrary, that no Body ought to be laid under a legal Incapacity of filling Offices of Trust in the Kingdom, where they were born and bred, because they differ from some established Notions of Religion in that Country. Opinions of Religion in themselves, having nothing to do with Affairs of State, and Things of a Civil Nature. And this is so true, that where Religion and Interest don't go together, they will never see any Contest of this sort: Take away the Salaries and Revenues annex'd to these Places, and your Highest-Churchmen and Excluders of others, will let the State run its Risque, and permit Dissenters, *Turk* or *Jew*, or any Body else to labour at the Publick Offices and Posts of the Nation. What I advance as true from Nature, Reason and common Justice, has ever been true, in Fact; but it being a tedious Task to go thro' the Examples of almost all Nations, and to lay before you their Practice in this Matter; I refer my Reader to a Book, written industriously on this Subject, wherein what I advance is demonstrated to the meanest Understanding beyond the Power of Contradiction*. However that I may not part with this Question too easily, let us bring the Case

* The Dissenter's Claim of Right to a Capacity for Civil Offices. Printed for Eman. Matthews, at the Bible in Paternoster-Row. 1717.

Home to our own Persons; let us suppose our selves born Protestants in *France*, and as much *Frenchmen* in Interest, Fortune, &c. as one who never removed Ten Miles from *Lyons* or *Blois*. Upon this Supposition we are to be very fond of the *French* Constitution, are honest Men likewise, and personally fitted for many Places of publick Trust in that Kingdom; we live quietly and are Loyal, pay our Taxes, pray for the King, and fight against every Nation which are Enemies to *France*. Would it not be hard that we, or any such-like Men should be excluded from serving their Country, purely because we don't believe Transubstantiation, or can't in Conscience admit of the Pope's Constitution *Unigenitus*? I can't see that any Man can answer in the Negative. And this is the exact Case of Protestant Dissenters here; only with this Difference, that the Advantage of the Similitude is on their Side; for they don't differ so widely from the Establish'd Church of *England*, as the *Hugonots* do from that of *France*. If the Objection recurs here, that such Persons, by being admitted into these Places, will in time grow upon us, and at last endanger our Church Government, and some other publick Establishment which they don't like. To this I have answer'd already, that, by what Reasoning and Observation I am able to make use of, I cannot find that the Protestant Dissenters wou'd desire an Alteration in our Constitution, *i. e.* wou'd desire to be govern'd by any other Form than King, Lords, and Commons; but that they

they should wish that this Power wou'd enact some new, and repeal some old Laws for their sake; this is no Wonder if they imagine either one or the other wou'd tend to their Advantage. Now, as it is not to be believ'd that it will ever be in their Power, were it in their Will to alter the whole Legislature, so neither is there any Glimpse or Appearance of there ever being such Persons employ'd in the Legislature, who will open the Gap so wide, as to let Dissenters into such Countenance and Power, as to endanger any of the present Laws which support our Establishment.

No one will affirm that our Laws, in regard to these Things, are entirely perfect and compleat; nay, 'tis without question that many Things will bear an Alteration, and that it were better to omit and abrogate many others. But these Things must be left to the Wisdom of the Nation. In the mean Time we may fully conclude, that all Things are safe and stable; and that Monarchy and Episcopacy will still continue in their flourishing Condition amongst us, altho' some circumstantial Alterations were made in any thing else.

But, supposing this Objection cou'd possibly take Place, and Dissenters shou'd make the imagin'd use of the Liberty contended for; Is there not a whole Legislature ready to animadvert upon them? For I suppose these Attacks to be gradual, like other Affairs of the same Nature. Can't the Prince in being displace the Heads of such a Faction, and won't he, since otherwise he is to fall

fall with them? Is it not in the Power of the Clergy or Judges to Remonstrate; nay, will not the Multitudes, *i. e.* Societies and Corporations, Petition to have these Men remov'd? Upon the whole, thus the Case stands. Reason pleads their Capacity to serve their Country; and Contingencies, Things of a casual Nature, and which may never happen, and which will only hurt themselves whenever they attempt them; these are the only Objections produc'd to the contrary.

It may not be improper on this Subject, to intimate, that it is too great an Affront put on the Executive Power in *England*, (as well as contradictory to the genetral Liberty of the Subjects of these Nations) not to suffer them to make Choice of Persons who are to execute under them. If the King for the Time being is entrusted with the Executive Part of the Laws, it is at his Ministers always, at his own Peril frequently, if they be not executed according to Law. Contradictory therefore is it to give him this Extensive Power first, and to make him accountable on extraordinary Occasions for it; nay, to give him an Oath at his Coronation for the due and legal Performance of it, and yet to prescribe to him by Law, what sort of Men he shall or shall not employ, in the Executive Office; and you may as well prescribe black or fair, as tie him down to those who think this Way or that in holy Things, to point out Men who go to a Church or a Meeting. 'Tis without dispute, that every

ry Prince in every Nation, will choofe Men of his own Complexion, and fuited to his Inclinations and Interests; and I can't but fay, that I fhould prefer a Churchman (equally qualified) to a Dissenter, did I hold the Reins in an *English* Ministry. But this has nothing to do with the Argument; and as we are safe from Popish Kings, so we are (I hope) from Ministers of State, who favour that Interest; and therefore I am sure it is no Compliment to our present wise, vertuous and Protestant Monarch to put it out of his Power to employ whom he pleases for the Good of the Publick, especially on Pretence of Religious Principles, since we are sure he won't employ any Papist.

Having now, as I think, remov'd the Incapacity from a Dissenter, and left a Protestant Prince at Liberty to dispense the Favours of the Crown to Persons most able and willing to serve the Publick, whatever their Opinions be about external Communion, &c. in Religion; I come to the last Question of all, Whether Protestant Dissenters shou'd be employ'd in Time of common Danger? I own, I wonder it shou'd be a Question, or else not decided for 'em at first Appearance of it; that being to ask a Man whether he shou'd suffer another to help and save him or not? But so stupid, not long since (to say no worse of it) have been many *British* Subjects, as to give it against themselves; some Men chusing rather to venture the worst Consequences of the Pretender's Invasion, than remove an Incapacity which
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the Protestant Dissenters lay under, whereby their Force wou'd have been added to the honest Part of the Conforming Churchmen, in order to defeat all the Attempts of the Impostor. Men ! who, when the Question was, Whether they wou'd arm a Third Power in defence of their Lives and Liberties, to defeat a Second which made its most vigorous Attacks upon them ? Men ! having liv'd in our Days, who decided in their own disfavour.

S E C T. IV.

Answering the last Argument for the Danger of the Church ; the Encouragement of Latitudinarians, &c.

A Third Reason spread amongst the People to support and account for the publick Voice of the *Church's Danger* (which has been partly spoken to already in the Treatment of the First) was, That the Ministers of State at that Time*, countenanc'd all sorts of Libertines in Opinion, even † *Free-Thinkers* and *Atheists*, &c. and that this Set of Men publickly avowing their Cause, and declaring themselves of their Principles and Party, gave a great Stroke towards the Downfall of Religion and the Church. I have already mention'd the mighty Boast that was made of this Part of the Argument ; which, how insignificant soever it be in

* Whig-Ministers for the first six Years of Queen Anne's Reign.

† A Word of an honest and valuable Signification, but in use to denote Infidelity, &c.

it self, and false in Fact; yet I cannot but think it worth while to give some account of it in this Place.

As it is natural for all Men to endeavour to become easy and pleas'd, so it is as natural to attach themselves, and to fall in with the Regulations and Measures of those Persons who are likeliest to please them, and make them easy, and who go upon Schemes, either exactly parallel, or else in a great measure proportion'd and agreeable to such as they propose to prosecute in the Conduct of their own Lives. The two * Parties in *England*, which I have mentioned before, did not entirely divide the whole Number of *Englishmen*, for there were several Subdivisions and Sects of Men, who distinctly list'd themselves into the general Service of *Whig* and *Tory*, as they found their own particular Sentiments to approach nigh, or meet Favour and Countenance from either of these Principles.

Thus Liberty, Toleration, and such-like Words, being what the *Low-Party*, or *Whigs* of the Church of *England* set up for; all *Protestant Dissenters*, nay, *Latitudinarians* in all Kinds, and every Person who advanc'd Freedom of Thought, and that Dominion which Men ought to have over their own Faith and Consciences, these Men piqu'd themselves as Friends to the *Whigs*, and assum'd that Appellation as

* Whig and Tory.

their Due, tho' (in its full and genuine Acceptation) they had no more Claim to it, than the Shadow has to be the Sun, because it follows it, and has a very imperfect Relation unto it.

The *High-Party* of the Church of *England* or *Tories*, on the other Hand advancing the Power of the Church and the Prince to an unwarrantable, illegal Degree, were lov'd and favour'd by too many of the Rigid Clergy, (*Nonjurors* especially) by *Jacobites*, *Papists*, and every Friend of Slavery and *Rome*. Now, for Explication-sake, putting the Case that the Words *Whig* and *Tory* make up the full Idea of the two principal contending Parties in *England*; and that they differ only in regard to the high or low Terms and Circumstances relating to the Power and Title of the Church and Kings of *England*, then the Question is, (since there are many other Parties and Sects of Men in these Realms, higher or lower in respect of these two) of which Extreme we have been, are, or may be in danger? viz. from *Protestant Dissenters*, *Republicans*, and *Latitudinarians*, &c. or from *Papists*, *Jacobites*, and all the Advancers of absolute unlimited Authority, on a lineal unalienable Right of Succession both in Church and State? The late Rebellion, I think, has determin'd this Question sufficiently; and I am sure, good Reason and honest Observation cannot fail to do it.

The Abettors of *Popery*, *Tyranny* and *Jacobitism* claim their Right, from the Constitution of *England*, and the common Right of Kings by the Laws of Nature and Nations; nay, they blaspheme

blaspheme and go farther, and call for it from the Law of God. A Claim strong enough indeed ! This Cause is carried on by a Majority (I am sorry to say it) of two Thirds through this Nation : It has all the Efforts of united *Popery* to sustain it from Abroad, and many *Protestants* (to their Shame be it spoken) at Home. It has been struggled for these two Hundred Years, and in its Defence Commotions and Rebellions have been rais'd ; Sword and Devastation have ravag'd and clear'd its Way ; and Plotting, Assassination, Murder, have been in use, in common use, to encourage and maintain it.

On the other side, Anarchy, Republicanism, Dissenting, Levelling, Libertinism, &c. pretend by no Claim to be instituted here ; I know of no Attempt in the Memory of this Generation to overturn the present Establishment, and to introduce these Things in its Place. I am sure, were there such a Design now broaching, and never so well laid, the Subjects of *England* who are this Way dispos'd, are so very few and inconsiderable in respect of their Adversaries, that they might as well endeavour to transplant the Gardens of *Versailles* to the Hundreds of *Essex* ; and I hope (and do not doubt but) this will be their Case to endless Ages ; and, lastly, that any foreign Power is either able or dispos'd to contribute to such a Work, or has, or will be, I dare say there is no one Man upon Earth has Face enough to affirm. No such Assistance was given when Anarchy was once successful

cessful for a while, and it is evident by the Transactions of those *Times, how unfit, and unable the Men I am now speaking of, are to govern the Kingdom by their own Power, or Principles; nay, let us but consider the Number, Interest, Power, and Education of the present Royal-Family, let us behold the deep Root that our Legal Constitution has taken for many Years together, and we shall find this Scheme to be scandalous and false; to be as chimerical as to make the tenderest Eastern Plant grow in the barrenest Part of the *Highlands of Scotland*.

But ! no Matter. The Turn was to be serv'd, nothing cou'd do it but the suppos'd Danger of the Church, and nothing cou'd put the Church in Danger, but the groundless Suspicion of the Attempts of some Men, who thought they gain'd a mighty Point in being only tolerated; and of a few others, who, when they had flanted with a little Wit and Impiety, were in no Pain whether this or any other Scheme succeeded or not; whereas the constant Outcry against Dissenters, and the hard Struggles to dispirit, oppress and disarm them, and every Man that cried out for Liberty and Protestantism, was carried on for a quite different Reason from this which was pretended, *viz.* that they might not be able to assist the *Whigs* when the last Push shou'd be given in favour of the Pretender; to which only

* *The Rebellion under Oliver Cromwell.*

End every thing pointed, and was calculated; a Peace made * that was the Scandal and Ruin of of the Nation; the Army either disbanded, or reform'd to the Inclinations of the very Pretender; the Fleet laid up; the publick Stores of War exhausted; in short, every thing but Providence dispos'd to bring the *Impostor* quietly in upon us. When I have added one thing more, I will have done with this Subject; which is, That our present Pretender, and all our most immediate Lineal and Hereditary Princes being *Papists*, our real Danger must ever come from them and their Friends; and therefore whilst common Sense is left amongst Men, we ought to conclude, that the setting some Papist on our Throne, is the only Design these People can entertain; and that (for certain) they will make use of Ten Thousand Artifices and Falsities, and every thing else which can contribute to bring this desirable Thing to pass.

† At Utrecht.



C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

Containing a true Account of the English
CONSTITUTION.

HAVING taken so much Pains to shew the Fallacy of our Enemies, and the Injuries they have forc'd on the greatest Part of the Nation, by abusing Things (of highest Excellence in their own Nature) to the worst of Purposes, *i. e.* by imposing first their own erroneous Models of a Church and State upon *English* Subjects, as the genuine Constitution of their Country, and then by alarming the Nation with the Danger of them; altho' in Truth these Systems had nothing that is *English* in them; and those, which truly were so, were in Danger only from themselves: I hope it won't now be thought unworthy of the Reader's Care and Time, to have a Specimen laid before him of our real Constitution, that he may the better see the true Nature of these Impostor-Principles which were design'd to be put upon us in its stead; and that the ill Consequences of them may appear, which had been intended, and which were, in a great Measure, brought into Practice.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

*Our Duty to G O D and the K I N G
embarrass'd and plain.*

WE have of late Years been infinitely perplex'd and disturb'd by Disputes and Quarrels about these Matters; and the Reason is, because the only Things requir'd to a right understanding of them, were never applied to and made use of, *viz.* The removing Prejudices, laying aside Interest and Passion, &c. and having recourse to nothing but Honesty and Common Sense in the Disquisition of them; for, I cannot think that the publick Tenure and State of Things here, are, in themselves, so melancholy and unfortunate as not to be intelligible, altho' they are become the necessary Objects of our daily Consideration and Practice.

We may raise Doubts and Scruples, and dispute upon them as long as we please, in Matters of Faith and Religious Duty, but nothing is surer than that the Christian Road to Heaven and Happiness is most plainly mark'd out to every Man of common Sense and Reasoning, and that the Embarrassments and Stops which are met with, are all of our own creating; for, the whole Will of God concerning our Salvation, without any doubt, is legibly to be seen and met with in the written Word, which he has communicated to us; whercin, if we find our selves engag'd, in Pas-
sages

sages sometimes hard to be understood, or entirely abstruse and hidden from us, we can in Reason conclude nothing but that they are not design'd for our particular Use, and that it is not our Duty to rack our Imagination, or torment our Conscience about them.

Thus also in regard to the Laws, and Civil State of *England*, we may write and read till we are weary ; honest Men may distract themselves, and Knaves may distract others, with needless Quarrels and long-spun Arguments ; but 'tis plain that *Liberty* and *Protestantism* are the Foundation of our Constitution and Government ; and therefore, all that an *Englishman* has to do on this Subject is, to remember that he ought to encourage and defend whatever strengthens and supports these two Affairs, and to discourage and destroy whatever tends to deface or abolish them ; notwithstanding any pretended Principle, Usage or Right to the contrary. Here's the *Criterion* ; and if we apply to this about Mens Ways and Actions, Hypocrisy will no longer be a Defence for any of our various Enemies ; and plain Sense, upon any particular Examination, will tell us, such a manner of Dealing can't possibly favour either *Liberty* or *Protestantism*, and therefore this Man is no Friend to our *English* Constitution.

S E C T. II.

The Original of Government in general.

TO begin. The Happiness and rational Liberty of Mankind being the Original Intention of that kind Creator who made us, and gave us our Being, it cannot be imagin'd that He design'd any Institution to take place which interfer'd with these Things, or infring'd in the least on the glorious Nature and Privilege of them; nor can there be a greater Wonder than that Men should be found, who cou'd contrive or consent to any Methods of Life, Religious or Civil, which ungenerously betray and give up these Native Blessings.

Amidst the many different Forms of Civil Government, as well as Religious Societies in the various Kingdoms of the Earth, those of *England* justly challenge the nearest Accession to this *original rational Liberty*, which God and Nature have most strongly imprinted in human Minds, as their unalienable Property and Inheritance; which tho' it be every Man's own, yet being naturally pointed out to him as fit to be transferred in Trust to some Community which shou'd determine and settle Circumstances relating to it, and wherein this particular Right shou'd be preserv'd and seen, in a general Spirit, and publick Oeconomy and Disposition of Things, as the most certain Way to preserve it secure and easy; it is a greater Wonder still, that, where the *securest* and *easiest* Way is demonstrably

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discover'd and establish'd, Men nevertheless can *there* be found so fickle, so deluded and wicked, as to embarrass themselves and their Neighbours with Attempts in Favour of any other ; and this is notoriously the Fate of injur'd *England* ; The restless Spirit of a bigotted and infatuated Party still struggling to reduce, both to a Religious and Civil Slavery, that general, original, rational Liberty of Mankind, which is visibly preserv'd to every particular Native of these Lands : preserv'd in a Body of the wholsomest Laws, made by their own Consent ; wherein (like *Plato's* Ideas) the *Genius* of Liberty is beheld abstracted from that Portion of it, which every single Subject possesses towards constituting the whole : and, preserv'd in the Settlement of a National Church on the Foundation of the Bible of Jesus Christ, that Birth-right of every individual Believer ; notwithstanding that the latter is most wickedly engross'd by a particular Set of Men in the Church of *Rome* ; and notwithstanding the Disgrace that too many Sons of the Church of *England* put upon their innocent Mother, by falsly straining a great Number of her Doctrines to that monstrous Height and unchristian Length, which we daily (in Appearance) declaim against, in *Her*, who is the Abomination of all the Christian Earth : Judaising thus on Christianity : bringing Popery into *England*.

There is no Controversy so idle and endless, as that about the Original of Government. They who hold one only sort, and that

that of Divine Appointment and Institution, commencing from the First Man ; and who would continue the same absolute and unalienable to one Man, in one Family, an impossible and senseless *Resvery* ! paramount and exclusive of governing in any other Way ; He, to be born a Lord and King, and the rest of Mankind Subjects, nay Slaves ; this has been long since justly exploded with Indignation and Contempt, being a thing plainly false in Fact, and ridiculous, nay monstrous in it self ; for it is as plain as any mathematical Proposition, that mere accidental Circumstances and Things unforeseen, unthought on, and the different Exigencies of Time, have given Birth to the Institutions of the several Kingdoms and Principalities of the Earth ; every Form whereof, no doubt, is as Divine as any other ; Government in general being the Will and Design of God and Nature, but which, amidst an universal Fluctuation of human Affairs can't alone claim a settled and unalterable Uniformity ; no ! the contrary has ever been in use. When God chose, it was one Man indeed, but that Choice confounds our Defenders of Unlimited Power and Unalienable Right ; for his first King, and all this King's Successors were limited * 400 Years before that first was crown'd ; and their † personal Qualifications seem to be the only Reasons of their being chosen at last. And as to

* Deut. 17. 16.

† 1 Sam. 9. 2, &c.

the Acquirement of the Power of Governing in other Nations (besides the *Jews*) I have shewn that, uncertainly and variously Men procur'd it : by Strength, by Stratagem ; nay, by mere Chance : and, one might add, by violent often and barbarous Methods. Thus in General.

SECT. III.

The Original of our English Government.

AS to those who raise our *English* Kings from a Seed of God's own immediate planting, who bring them directly down from Heaven, and surround them with unapproachable Distance and Glory, and with unalienable Right and Title, and Power unlimited ; I wou'd have these Men read our *English* History, and they will find the Original of our particular Government also to be entirely various and unknown, and to have been owing at first to the little successful Skirmishes of petty Princes, till from being divided into several Kingdoms, (made up of several Nations) all *England* fell into the Power of one *Saxon* King ; whose Successors lost and recover'd it again by Turns, till at length a *Norman*, by Strength of Arm settled it in such a *Divine Right*, as (through several Variations from the Lineal Prince) obtains at present, under the happy Sanction of a mix'd Government : the best of Kings (and a Protestant) being seated on the Throne. The Clergy and Laity (Nobles especially) under the *Saxon* Government were assembled together to advise the

the King on extraordinary Occasions. The Conqueror certainly acted thus; in whose Time Petitions and Remonstrances were frequent, from the People to the King; especially upon his endeavouring to establish *French* Laws and Customs here: But both before and after him, our Princes govern'd by Methods very Parliamentary; there were plain Contracts between King and People, and a Coronation-Oath was ever observ'd; thus, by degrees, to the Reign of *Henry the First*, in whose Time * Parliaments began to resemble what they are now, and thence to our present Days, Experience of many kinds have almost taught us what it is to be *Englishmen*†. Woeful have been the Experiments; the Revolutions and Changes, remarkable; and strange and various the Events; but all happily ending in a Protestant Succession, a moderate Reign, and a numerous Royal Family.

* From the Year 1126, to 1133.

† Particularly the Struggles in King Charles the 1st's Time for the Bill of Exclusion, &c. The resisting King James the 1st, and bringing that Revolution to pass. The Trial of Dr. Sacheverel, and the opposing the late Queen's Ministry during her last 4 Years.



S E C T. IV.

*All High-flown Notions of a King's Title and Power
favour the Pretender.*

TWill be no Secret to let the World know that this exalting of Unlimited Power, and insisting on Hereditary Right for our *English* Kings, were the only Foundation whereon could be built a Prospect ever to introduce the Pretender, and that therefore *Papists*, *Nonjurors*, and other rigid *Jacobites* ply'd this Argument over and over, procur'd (besides numberless Pamphlets) a Book to be written in Folio in Vindication of it; * the Author of which most remarkably got clear of his Trial in the late Reign, with little or no Punishment, altho' the Book be swell'd with Treason against the whole Constitution of *England*; but thus it was, and into a Thousand Shapes were these Arguments turn'd to serve and obtain the grand Design. The only Wonder is, how things so injurious to Mankind in general, and so foreign to the *English* Constitution in particular; nay, utterly destructive of its Interest and Happiness, could be so easily impos'd upon *Englishmen*.

To speak the Truth, these Opinions have been long in Vogue amongst us, insomuch that many ancient Subjects of this Kingdom, renown'd both for Honesty and Learning, have

* Dr. Belford, a Nonjuror.

most warmly (tho' unwarily) advanc'd the Truth and Legality of them; especially Divines, who have made unlimited unconditional Obedience to our Monarchs, as necessary to Salvation, as Faith in our Saviour, and Repentance towards God. These Men told us that the only Form of Government to be met with in Scripture is *Regal*; that, whenever this Affair is mention'd in those holy Writings, 'tis ever in the Language of *Kings*; *The King*, &c. that they are call'd the Lord's Anointed, and that we are to obey them on Pain of Damnation, as that *Power in being* expressly mention'd by St. Paul. This I have heard, and of this you may meet enough in Books printed on the Subject*.

But these Men don't consider that this Word (*King*) is made use of in Scripture, as being the most usual Form of Government in the *East*, and therefore hereby are meant and signified all sorts and Forms of Government, and Civil Polity whatever; and it ought to be remember'd, that if the contrary were true, they might as well exclude *Queens* as Common-wealths, &c. from governing; for this the literal Acceptation will do. But this Affair is so far otherways, that in ancient Times Scripture mentions *Ducal* Governments; and the Government of Cities, which was very usual, (every City being a Kingdom of it self and the Districts about it)

* Vid. Sacheverell's Trial.

these were more like Common-wealths than Kingdoms of a Regal Sort: Besides, the Jewish Form was nothing Regal till *Saul's* Time; I don't think what Men call their * *Theocracy* reaches this Argument; the Jews desir'd a King to Reign over them, and to go out and fight their Battles; and we know they were govern'd by Judges, by Prophets, nay, a Prophetess: so senceless are all the antique Arguments built blindly on the Notion of a King, as the only Governour destin'd for Mankind by Almighty God. Further; who will affirm that in early Times no other Form of Government prevail'd; or that Kings were every where absolute? We are well assur'd that long enough before our Saviour, Common-wealths made their Figures in *Greece, Italy*, and other Parts of the Earth; and, that they do so now, and that they have done so since, and at the very Time that he appear'd, is indisputably true; so that we must conclude, that the Powers in being which *St. Paul* commands us to obey, not only for *Wrath*, but *Conscience-sake*, nay, upon Pain of *Damnation*, were not the Kingly Forms of Government alone, but all other Lawful Rulers and Powers whatever.

As ridiculous as the contrary is to Reason and the Nature of Things, it kept its Ground in *England* most successfully in several Reigns, and seldom came to be canvass'd or explain'd without the Peril of the present Monarch. For which Reason a very wise and prosperous

* Being govern'd by God.

* Queen of *England*, was remarkable for never suffering one Argument, concerning her Title to the Crown, to be brought into agitation.

In King *Charles* the First's Time, the Tide ran in violence and madness on the Prince's Side; and he, by Advice of his Queen and Ministers, assum'd, and the People refus'd: one insisted, t'other struggled, disobey'd, nay rebell'd, till at last it ended in the most melancholy, wicked and barbarous Murther of that excellent Prince; a Prince! in himself endow'd with many vertuous and valuable Qualifications.

Such a Murther as this being the Extremity of popular Licentiousness, it soon turn'd the Abhorrency quite another Way, and the *Power* and *Title* of the King after this, grew so great Favourites by degrees, that it tempted King *James* the II^d to try the Strength of the Argument, when he saw it had well nigh universally obtain'd. But he too fell a Sacrifice (tho' no bloody one) to another Extreme, the inviolable Sacredness of an unalienable Title and unlimited Power in the Crown.

Now, as it is certain that God Almighty has tied down no one Nation on the Earth, much less all of them, to the Regal, or to any certain Way of ruling and administering Power, our Countrymen have been mistaken in this Affair, by imagining that *Regal Power* is only of Di-

* *Queen Elizabeth.*

vine Institution; and by not attending to this Truth, that the *Regal Power* is not the Supreme Power in these Kingdoms; not *the Power in Being in* England, as *St. Paul* expresses it: and therefore not that Power, Disobedience to which (strictly speaking) procures *Damnation*. No! the *Supreme Power*, the Legislature or Constitution, call it which you please, consists of the King and Three States of the Realm, and these are to be obey'd, as the whole Enacting Power, on Pain of *Damnation*; which, having plac'd the *Execution* of all Laws in the Person of the Prince, those Laws are the Rule and Measure for him to govern by, as they are for us to obey.

A most ingenious, pious, and learned * Pre-
late, whose Works shew him a Friend to Man-
kind, as well as to the Religious and Civil
Rights of his own Country, has so fully pro-
ved the † Unreasonableness and Madness of
tying Nations down to the next *immediate*
Heir in any one Royal Family, that his Ad-
versaries are almost all come over to his Senti-
ments in this Matter, and are ready to give up
this long-contended for Strictness of Succession;
and no doubt but they do it with Pleasure and
Surprize, to think that a Thing, so plain in it
self, should so long have been kept hidden, and
reserved from them. For what other Resource

* Dr. Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor.

† In his *Preservative*.

can Men possibly apply to in case of the Incapacity of a Prince, who is so unfortunate as to be born the next Heir, whilst he is unqualified to sustain the Weight and Dignity of a Crown; but to lay him aside, and set up the next qualified Person? And what may more reasonably be often expected, than that Incapacities, in one kind or other, should happen to the frail Sons of Humane Flesh and Blood? Neither a long Descent of Noble and Royal Ancestors, nor the Privilege of being wrapp'd in early Purple, not any of the first and best Privileges of Men, when lodg'd in a Family, being able to secure the *Infant* from saddest Accidents, nor to give Security that the *Youth* shan't be vicious and debas'd, the *Man* both barbarous and savage; so little fit to govern polite and civiliz'd People, as to appear too untractable for the rudest Inhabitants of a mountainous and waste Country. As the Reasoning here is true, so has Matter of Fact born Witness to it; for all the World knows how Thrones have groan'd under some monstrous Princes, and how Subjects have tamely suffer'd those cruel Things on this false Principle, the lightest Part whereof had never been their Fate, had they had Knowledge and Spirit enough to assert their just Liberty, to set themselves and their Country free.

It is worth Observation, that, besides the usual unfortunate Casualties of Mankind, to which *English* Princes are subject in common with the rest of the World, and many there

are which unqualify Men for the meanest Offices of current and domestick Life, as well as the Burthen of a Crown, we of these Kingdoms are afflicted with Pretenders to our Government, the necessary Consequences of whose bare Opinions in Religion (abstracted from every other Consideration) unqualify them to make, or preserve us an happy or quiet People, and this as much, nay more than all other Disqualifications put together. They, by being Papists, being obliged to overturn our Laws, extirpate our Religion, destroy our Property, and deface our Liberty. I am sure any Man who is obliged to do these Things, is not fit for ours, nor any other Throne whatsoever; but, as Papists, these Men are bound by a religious Oath to do this, and therefore are utterly incapable to hold the Reins of *British* Government, though otherways never so well qualified for it, by Birth, Virtue, good Understanding, and every thing else; and this is so plain and easy, that every other Notion on this Subject must be more than unnatural, must be downright irreligious. Nay, the contrary is nothing else but political *Fatality*, which as justly deserves to be exploded with Indignation, as that which unthinking Men have brought into Religion. It being as absurd, that our kind and good God, who has imprinted on our Minds a Desire of Regularity and Government, that he shou'd necessarily doom us (the best of his Earthly Creatures) to suffer all the Outrages and Slavery that a savage-minded

minded Man shou'd think fit to torture us with-
 al, if born to be our King ; this Notion is as
 unworthy of the Goodness of God, as to ima-
 gine he has, from and to all Eternity, unavoida-
 bly destin'd Myriads of poor Souls to the In-
 sults and Torments of blaspheming and wicked
 Spirits. Sad Rights Divine ! and most impious
 and cruel Notions of the blessed Nature of God !
 No ! he too well knew *what was in Man*, ne-
 cessarily to subject Numbers of them to the mere
 Will of any One of them ; since, under their
 present Frame, they are capable of becoming
 devoid of Reason, Justice, nay Humanity ; and
 in length of Time to become even *Papists*. As
 these Things are inconceivable of God, so are
 they contrary to all Reason, and the Nature of
 Things. Men certainly are born Lords of them-
 selves, and are free to defend Life and sustain it,
 after the justest and best Methods they are able ;
 and whenever they give the Right and Title
 which they have to themselves, up to the Power
 of another, it must be for no other Reason but
 the hopes of finding it more satisfactorily pre-
 serv'd, and deriv'd to them in Societies and As-
 sociations, than before. Men therefore surely
 can give no more than what they naturally and
 originally found themselves possess'd of, which
 being a Desire and Endeavour to preserve them-
 selves safe and easy, not to hurt others, or be
 hurt by them ; *He* must needs be mistaken who
 fancies *He* gave, or cou'd give a Power to any
 Man, or Set of Men, to bind him in Chains, to
 rack or torture him at his or their Pleasure.

A Man must be inhuman to imagine it, and neither understand himself, or the Relation that one thing has to another. But, supposing any one Man cou'd be found willing to give up the Right of himself to another to be us'd as barbarously as he pleas'd, whenever he was in the Humour to treat him thus ; surely he cannot make such a Bargain for the rest of his Fellow-Creatures. 'Tis impossible to affirm it ; and therefore the Argument is plain on our side, who gloriously oppose Tyrants, and Kings of frantick and savage Minds, of cruel, unjust, and bloody Tempers ; in *England* we must add *Papists* ; notwithstanding the *Chicane* of a few deluded *Englishmen*, &c. who most impiously pretend to bring Arguments from Heaven to justify Slavery or Banishment, Poverty, and every thing calamitous and evil, out of Complaisance and a Chimerical Notion of Obedience to Superiors, unrestrain'd by any Terms or Conditions whatever: contrary to Original Contracts now existing, contrary to *Magna-Charta*, Acts of Parliament, and many Usages both before and in our own Times.



C H A P. V.

Of RELIGION.

WERE I to account for *True Religion* after the Manner of *Mythologists*, or those who entertain their Readers with the Beauties of Apologues or Fables, I wou'd derive its Genealogy from some kind *Æon* or ministring Spirit to the supreme God of Heaven and Earth : and from another Being which I wou'd call *Humaneity*, or the good Genius of Mankind, *i. e.* a Being made up of all the dispers'd Vertues and Accomplishments of human Minds : For true Religion is the only Medium, whereby Heaven descends, and is communicated to Earth ; and whereby the Powers of human Souls rise far above the Boundaries of this our Globe, or the most distant Orbs, and *reach* the invisible Throne of the Almighty God. I say, whatever might be produc'd *by Invention* on this Subject, we are assur'd that such a Participation as this, whereby Things unseen, and of the most perfect and exalted Nature, are made the Objects of our Understandings, and the Joy and Delight of our Hearts, betpeaks an Original beyond the Power and Goodness of Things created ; and is, accordingly, deriv'd and implanted in us by the Only, One, Invisible, Eternal God.

S E C T. I.

Happiness of True Religion.

Blessed Privilege of Mortal Men ! whereby our Understandings are enlarg'd, enlighten'd and delighted, our Wills regulated and taught to exercise themselves about Things the noblest and best ; and the Passions and Affections of our Minds preserv'd from engaging in Objects contemptible and hateful ; but allow'd at the same time to warm and indulge themselves in truest, because innocent Pleasures.

Nor are our Minds alone oblig'd to Religion ; 'tis the Preservative also and Restorer of our Bodies and Fortunes ; Health, long Life, and prosperous Affairs, being the infallible Result and Consequences of it.

These were the Beauties and Advantages of Religion, reason'd out by the natural Strength and Force of the mere Understandings and Minds of Men : But, when reveal'd Notices were superadded and imparted unto them, especially when Life and Immortality came to Light through the Gospel ; then Religion made its brightest Figure, and was array'd in most attractive and powerful Perswasions : Quietness of Mind, and Indolence of Body ; Appetites govern'd, and Passions subdu'd ; Reputation and Esteem ; Benevolence and good Nature ; Forbearance and Forgiveness, and every present Thing that is valuable and good, being not only
the

the certain Effects of it now ; but an Assurance being also added, of a Resurrection, after Death, to another Life of endless Duration and unspeakable Bliss.

On the contrary, were I to describe *False Religion* the same Way ; I would suppose it to be the Offspring of the Chief of wickedest Spirits in Hell, in Combination with the Evil Genius of Mankind ; and shou'd conceive it (as really it is) endlessly Industrious in dispersing Superstitions, Enthusiasms, Error, Infidelity and Blasphemy amongst Men : Setting up unreasonable Principalities and Powers to direct, and regulate Opinion and Thinking ; and to censure, distress, persecute, nay murder all those, who wou'd not by Words, and Deeds, by Preaching, Printing, assenting to, nay Swearing, give into every Notion settled by some particular Men, set apart to make Systems and Rules for all the rest of Mankind to think and act by ; banishing this noble Exhortation of our Saviour's from off the Earth : *He that has Eyes to see, let him see ; and He that has Ears to hear, let him hear* ; and then accommodating Men with Eyes, and Ears, and Understandings, and Hearts, and confining them to see and hear, and believe as they were taught, without ever conceiving that they ought to make use of their own Understandings in the Conduct of themselves : And, lastly, I shou'd imagine *False Religion* ever furnishing its Votaries with a Profusion of Arrogance, Positiveness, Imposition and Cheat, and above all, with never-failing

Uncharitableness, Detraction and Reproach.

From these two different Views of True and *False Religion*, we may see of what Importance it is that the World shou'd be well instructed in the Principles of the former, and that the Practice of those Principles shou'd be every where inforc'd and observ'd : The Necessity is plain, tho' the Accomplishment of either be difficult and has miscarried, as is too evident from the great Success which its Opposite has met with in the World, not only in our own Times, but in the several Periods of Ages past ; tho' I think one may, with strictest Justice, affirm, that the World from hence, has felt and labour'd under greater Evils and Wickedness ; that more Shadow and Dreams of Devotion, as well as False Worship, have been impos'd upon it, more Ignorance and Superstition triumph'd, more Cheat and Hypocrisy prevail'd ; and, in short, more Barbarity, in many Kinds, committed on the account of Religion, since *Popery* (that most corrupt and Heterodox Part of the Christian Religion) has made its powerful Advances in *Christendom*, than all the Remainder of the Earth besides has experienc'd, tho' the Cruelties of many Ages past be added together.

The Pretences to *True Religion* have been so various, and so wicked and notorious have been the Disguises and Fallacies of those, who have had the Advantage of administering in the most perfect Religion that ever yet Almighty God (the only Object of it) reveal'd to Man-

Mankind ; that, in discoursing on this Head, we must commence, as before, from the beginning of Things, and deduce the Nature of *Religion* and *Priesthood*, thro' all the succeeding Tracts of Time, in order to see thro' the very Reason of these Things, and to judge rightly of them in the Light wherein they stand at this present Time.

SECT. II.

Of Natural Religion.

R*eligion* is the Worshipping of GOD : which Worship being liable to Variations and Difference ; let it be observ'd where it will, it must consist of *Essentials*, and these, whether dictated by Nature, or reveal'd by God, are not in the Power of Men to alter or dispencc with ; and it must also be attended with *Circumstantials*, which every Man, or Society of Men may omit or multiply, as they shall think proper or convenient.

In a State of Nature the Essentials to Religion seem to have been confin'd to the best Persuasion every Man cou'd arrive at, of the Nature and Attributes of God, from his own Reasoning, Observation, and Comparison of these Things, with the Sentiments of other Men. This, as to the Object ; as to the Acts of Religion, Nature cou'd only direct to pray to God, as every particular Man's Heart instructed and taught him, *i. e.* to thank him when he found himself bless'd with Health or

Riches, or any other Temporal Good, as much, or more than was the Lot of his Friends about him : or, when he saw that he escaped any Misfortune or Evil, either after an ordinary, or some extraordinary Manner.

Petition, Deprecation, and Thanksgiving, being the Essentials of Natural Religion, the Circumstantials of these were at first left to every Man's own Choice, *viz.* the Time, the Place, and Substance, or Subject of the Worship ; the particular History of which Affairs affords great Variety and Delight.

Whilst every Man thus was his own Priest, and either reason'd, or carv'd out his own God, and made his House its Temple, or what other Place he liked better ; and offer'd and sacrific'd, when, and what his own Thoughts suggested to him ; questionless as Men cemented into Societies, and got together for Safety and Defence, and plac'd some Man, or Men at their Head, to act in behalf, and for the good of the rest in Civil, Military, and Social Life ; so, no doubt but they must imagine that those several Acts of Worship which they singly paid to their respective Deities, were fit to be offer'd up in common with the rest of the Society ; that, what any one Member cou'd not pretend to expect, on the bare Strength of his own Performance, might be granted at the joint Petition of them all ; there being the same Reason (as they were a Community) for the united Adoration and Service of them all together, as there was for their respective Offices in private before.

before. The Difficulty was how to arrive at an Uniformity and Centre of Devotion, in that great Variety of Sentiments which distracted them about the Nature and Number of Gods, &c. And indeed, what Nature directed Men to in this Case, and what was Fact from the beginning of the World, in several Kingdoms of it, and to Day is the same amongst the Heathens or Pagans, is very well worth our Attention, and, I must say, in some Respects, our Imitation too, altho' we are bless'd with the Privilege of Supernatural Light, and have those spiritual Illuminations added to help our Understandings, which is, and was their Misfortune not to have enjoy'd.

In this Case then we find, that, in every Kingdom or City anciently, the Government or Majority declar'd for some particular Deity or Deities, and set Men apart to take Care of their Publick Service and Worship, prescribing Methods both to the Essentials and Circumstantials of it: But we rarely or never find that any of the Natives or other Inhabitants of that Kingdom or City, were forc'd or constrain'd to Worship after the *establisht Way*, or punish'd if they did not. No; far from this, all private Persons enjoy'd their private Inclinations, and pursued their own Ways in every Religious Act: not only erecting particular Images, Shrines, Groves, &c. but dedicating Men and Things, after their own Judgments, to the Use and Honour of whatever God they thought fit; nay further, at their general Place and Time of Publick

lick Meeting to Worship, Sacrifice, &c. every Man offer'd what Oblation or Prayer he esteem'd most proper, to please or pacify the Deity to whom he address'd.

And thus also it was, in Length of Time, when Schools, Colleges, and diversity of publick Temples came to be built; the Priests were made by the King or Government, and the common or extraordinary Services of their Gods were answer'd regularly by those Priests, or, as particular Orders were sent them, They, for Learning, Wisdom, or Vertue, being chosen into that Office, out of those Schools or Colleges, and had several Names given them in several Kingdoms, as *Magi* in *Persia*, *Brachmans* in *India*, &c. But then the Government was careless whether the Votary pray'd to *Jupiter* or *Apollo*, or whether their Subjects sided with *Zeno* or *Epicurus*; or any other Person who set himself at the Head of a Religious Party; if, whatever their Opinions were about Divinity, they were found to be equally *Romans*, *Persians*, or *Indians*, whenever the good of the Common-wealth came into Consideration; and we all know what wou'd have been the Consequence, had any of the Emperors of these Kingdoms, tho' back'd by whole Senates, impos'd Creeds, at that Time, on the People, or punish'd or banish'd Men, because they believ'd not in *Hercules*, or were ready to die for *Aristotle's* Opinions.

Nor

Nor is this really, or shou'd it be, one Jot, alter'd by the Revelation of Christianity; People in every Kingdom having a natural Right to their own Sentiments still; with which Right nothing shou'd interfere, provided, on all publick Occasions, they shew themselves ready to defend and protect their Country, and are Loyal and Faithful to the Lawful Government thereof. Nay, this Liberty seems to be the Privilege peculiarly of the Professors of the Gospel of Christ, and the very Design of its Institution; Christians being commanded to *search the Scriptures, to try every Spirit, and to hold fast to that which is best.*

And, no doubt, the Consequences of the Bible plainly shew, that this Freedom is the Birth-right of every Christian; for, the different Opinions of Christians, (tho' they have one written Word to go by) are almost as many as the Sentiments of Philosophers were about moral Good and Evil, and the Nature of the Gods, &c. they not being able to agree at this very Day, neither about Church-Power and Government, the Use of a Surplice, or a Form of Prayer, any more than about the very Objects of some Parts of their Faith, one Man condemning the main Essentials of another Man's Adoration and Practice, and one Christian Church (and she guilty of Idolatry) excommunicating all the rest, as Schismatical, Heretical, and every thing Criminal and Odious.

As to those Men who think this Way, and lodge the Power of Dictating Faith and Conscience in the Hands of a Few, call'd the *Church*, *i. e.* the Priests and Ministers of Religion and holy Things, and derive the Authority of this spiritual Imposition and Tyranny (as they do the Temporal one) from the beginning of the World, commencing from *Adam*, that Original absolute King and Priest; it must be roundly affirmed once for all, that this is a ridiculous Suggestion in it self, and is most plainly contradicted in Scripture: tho' so very fond of this Notion are its Abettors and Friends, that, most oddly, do they make *Paradise* to signify the *Church*, and call *Adam's Expulsion* from thence, an *Excommunication*; not unlike * him, who, writing the History of Councils, vainly began the first of them from the Trinity, because God said, *Let us make Man*.

SECT. III.

Religion trac'd through the Old Testament.

THAT this may appear in its genuine Light, let us take the Bible (that only Guide) along with us, and we shall find *Cain* and *Abel*, and all their Posterity acting in a different Method from this, till direct Revelation laid Men under particular Obligations:

* *Mr. Baile.*

and then I will be bold to say, all Things were prescrib'd to Mankind in Conformity to the general *Liberty* at first allowed and pointed out to them.

No doubt, but *Adam* had something of Religion revealed to him; but of any Particulars, besides the Probability of observing a *Seventh-day*, we are Strangers, and how he performed them: the only positive Command that we read of, having been broken by him. And, as to the two Persons abovemention'd, we know nothing of them, but that they worship'd God, each of them, their own Way, as I suppose Men then, and for many Years afterwatds, did; but we read nothing any where in *Moses*, of constraining Men to one Method of Religion, and the Worship of God. And therefore our Commentators and Expositors may entertain themselves, and perplex others as much as they please with these Words in *Genesis*, in *Process of Time*, and may hence advance, that, uniform, Annual, monthly or weekly Devotions were then publicly in Use, and what they call a *Church* Establish'd; but it is likely that there is no more intended by these Words, than, that as soon as *Cain* came to Years of Consideration and Maturity, and saw that People and the Knowledge of Things grew fast upon him, he then began to reason about the Nature of God; and what he had learn'd about Religion and Worship, and concluded it proper, regularly to offer some part of the Fruits of the Earth, by Way of Religion, and as an Acknowledgment and Token of Gratitude to

the Great and Kind Creator of him and all the World, and the Donor of them and all other Blessings. And this Interpretation is supported, because it is said afterwards, in *Seth's* Time, that Men began then first to call on the Name of the Lord ; and *Adam* did not beget him till he was 180 Years old ; at which Time the Country about Paradise was very well stock'd with People : From all which it is natural to believe that God Almighty neither set *Adam* or any of his Successors immediately apart by direct Appointment to be *Lineal and Hereditary Priests or Ministers* in holy Things, and to oblige a Church, *i. e.* the rest of Mankind to Worship him, after the very manner prescrib'd by them ; nor cou'd *Moses* omit speaking to it, if it had been so ; but having endow'd them with Understandings and intellectual Knowledge, left them to Reason out the Nature of Religion, upon what Discoveries were made, as well as of Arts and Sciences, and other Actions of Life, till he shou'd think fit to impart more full Revelations by the several Steps and Degrees, which, in length of Time, we see he did to one particular People in the World, but left the rest of Mankind to use their own Judgment upon the whole Affair of Religion.

We find *Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph* making Offerings, and building Altars on extraordinary Occasions ; and read of *Melchisedeck*, an Heathen King and Priest, who had no Successors ; nor can we doubt, but that,
Variety

Variety of Priesthood, and Worship was now in use in the World ; and questionless, whilst the People of *Israel* were in Captivity in *Egypt*, they offer'd up publick Prayers and Devotions to the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and had Persons agreed on amongst them to perform those Offices whenever they had Opportunity ; but, when their Freedom was compleat, and they were order'd to institute and observe a Ceremony in remembrance of their Escape from *Egypt*, and the Preservation of their First-born, we find that every Master of a Family perform'd that Ceremony, and kill'd the Passover, altho' it was *Sacramental* ; nay, tho' it was the very Act of the instituting of it. Soon after, * when the People were to hear a Discourse between God and *Moses*, there are *Priests* mention'd at large, long before the Ordination of *Aaron*, tho' there be no previous Account of them, or their Separation to that Office ; and when *Aaron* with his Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and 70 of the the Elders † were to be Witnesses at the Head of the People of God's talking to *Moses* a second time, and sending Messages by him to the People, *Young Men of the Children of Israel* were sent to offer *Burnt-Offerings* and *Sacrifice* *Peace-Offerings of Oxen unto the Lord* ; all which Designations of these Men to these Things, are very uncertain, and remain unexplain'd ; but in all

* Exodus 13.

† Chap. 20.

likelihood they were perform'd by the Father, or rather the First-born of the Families, because the latter were by God's Command * *dedicated unto the Lord; but might be redeemed* †; and were afterwards superseded by God's Appointment, ‡ the Tribe of *Levi* being set apart for the *Ministry*; and now indeed God form'd a Lineal and Visible Church and State of *Priesthood*, these Men being separated from the rest of their Brethren; and this *Priesthood* cou'd not possibly fail, God having consecrated a whole Tribe to that Purpose, which then consisted of above 22000 Men.

But we must observe, that whilst the *Jewish Nation* was made happy by this Inclosure, and by God's peculiar Dispensation, the rest of Mankind, whereof these were but a small Number, were left in the same Way as before, to serve God according to their own Understandings and Judgments; neither *Moses* or the *Prophets* having Commission to go out and Teach all Nations.

God's Doings being unsearchable in all Things, and his Ways past finding out; He, neither having given us the Reasons of many Things, unintelligible at present, nor being obliged so to do; amongst the rest, not having accounted, why Evil and Error were permitted to distract and confound this Earth of ours; or why he did

* Exodus 13. 12.

† Levit. 27. 29.

‡ Num. 3. 12.

not reveal himself to all Mankind, as well as to the *Jews* ; or force the Gospel of Christ afterwards, or oblige it at this Day to take Possession of all the Kingdoms of the Earth. These Things being hid from us, let us have recourse to what he has clearly reveal'd, and entertain our Thoughts with those Things which fall within the compass of our Understanding, and are become our Duty and Care.

Passing by the *Jews* then, and their Oeconomy, which in many Things were extreme particular, and therefore died with their Kingdom and Common-wealth ; it cannot but entertain and please us, to begin with a Dispensation that is design'd to have the *Ends of the Earth for its Possession*, and which (notwithstanding a temporary Miscarriage in its Extension) will, one Day, obtain universally over the Face of the whole Glöbe.



S E C T. IV.

Religion trac'd through the New Testament.

WHEN our Saviour came to prove his Divine Mission, which he did by Miracles and Wonders, by fulfilling old Prophecies, and establishing new ones, he chose Twelve Men, and endow'd them with Supernatural Power to carry on the great Work which he had begun, and having finish'd his own Course, left them entire Masters of God's whole Will concerning the *Salvation of Mankind*; commanding by speaking, but especially by writing, to communicate it to the World; endowing them and a few others with the Power of *Miracles* at first, till Mens Understandings were convinc'd, and the new Doctrine had made its Way in the World; and having separated them by a special Designation to minister in holy Things, he commission'd them to separate others also, as they esteem'd them worthy of the Employment; promising that the Church shou'd never fail, that *he wou'd be with it to the End of the World*, i. e. that notwithstanding Persecution, Apostacy, and whatever Calamities shou'd happen, there never shou'd be a Time wherein some Professors of Christianity shou'd not be found; and that at last he wou'd call the whole World into a Belief and Practice of his Gospel.

The

The Church being thus of Divine Appointment, that is, God having appointed Ministers to preach the Gospel to as many as would receive and entertain it, the whole Number of Believers, Ministers and People (where-ever dispers'd) constitute and make up this Church: and where any particular Christians, in a Town or Kingdom, receiving the written Word of God, agree on such or such Forms of Discipline and Order in the Administration of that written Word, these People make up what we call a particular Church, as of *Ephesus* or *Rome*; *England* or *France*. The Christian Church then not being confin'd to the Ministers of it alone; it will be worth our while at this Time of so many different Controversies about these Things, to enquire distinctly what are the *Titles* and *Powers*, both of *Christian Ministers* and the *Christian Church*.



SECT.

The Church being thus of Divine Appointment, that is, God has appointed Ministers to it, and has given them a Title of the Christian Clergy.

AS to the *Titles of Ministers in the Christian Church*, they are most certainly of divine Institution; and, for my self, I must affirm it, as my Belief, that God Almighty instituted and design'd a Superiority, and consequently Degrees amongst them. This is to me visible in the holy Bible, and I am confirm'd in it (I mean Episcopacy) by the unquestion'd Practice and Authority of 1500 Years, from our Saviour and downwards. Nay, I think it of Advantage to the Government of the Church, and most agreeable to the Nature of Government in general. However, I accuse no Man who can't be brought to believe, as I do, on this or any other Subject, and desire Leave to go on in remarking, that as the Title of the *Jewish Priesthood* was Divine, so is that of the *Christian Clergy* also, and therefore their Office ought to be held in the highest Veneration, and their Persons because of their Office. But as every thing admits of Extremes, so does the particular Affair before us, too many being so wild and extravagant in their Notions, as to imagine not only that the establishing a Christian Clergy, but that all Religion is a Political Cheat and Imposition; and others carrying the Necessity of sacred Offices from some Mens Hands to so high a Pitch, as to affirm that no Possibility of Salvation can be had without them,

them. Since our Saviour's Days, this last Doctrine has been often sent abroad into the World, and we may easily perceive what Set of *Clergy* they were, who perplex'd Mankind with the Severity of it; aiming at *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth*: nor can I but be very sorry to see it reviv'd in our Nation, with so much Vehemence as it is, especially by Men who call themselves *Protestants*.

To speak out therefore as rationally as I can upon this Subject, I think it ought not to be denied, where a lawful *Christian Ministry* is establish'd and can be had, that those Men are very guilty, who do not apply to the Offices of that Ministry for the ordinary Means of serving GOD, and consequently of saving their Souls; such a *Ministry*, I say, as may be met with in Scripture, or, at least, is not repugnant to any thing that is to be found, on this Subject, in those sacred Books. And yet too many of such *vain* Men are to be found: May GOD enlighten them, and bring them to a better Mind!

However, on the other Hand, I can't but extremely condemn those Persons who would tie God Almighty down to particular Rules and Forms, and won't suffer Him, in their Opinion, to receive any one Man to Mercy, who dies without passing regularly through all the Offices of a *Christian Clergyman*. Now, as this is fastening Rules upon God, which we are sure He has not oblig'd Himself to observe, so, Reason and Experience entirely confute the

Opinion, that one Lineal Descent of *Ministers* is not only necessary to Salvation, but all their *Offices* are necessary likewise, whether initiatory, intermediate, or dimissory. If you consult what I have observ'd of the History of *Priesthood* and *Ministers* in holy Things, you will find this Way of arguing all along confuted by Matter of Fact; the same hard Dealing still remains to be remov'd from all the present Heathen World; nay, Christians themselves can give no Demonstration that they are secure in this Matter, it being possible that false *Consecrations* and *Ordinations* might have been put upon the Church in the brightest, as well as darkest Ages of it; Excommunicated, heretical, and unlawful *Bishops* might have convey'd down the holy Mission, and many other Embarrassments, are likely to have so much perplex'd this Affair, that I am sure it is impossible ever to prove the Truth of it. *Papists*, no doubt, have ever found their Account in advancing this Doctrine, viz. *Infallibility*, *Authority* and *Power*; and have the face still to maintain the Demonstration of an *Uninterrupted Succession* of *Ministers* from *Christ* to this Day, notwithstanding the known Impossibility of it, and the particular Schism (amongst others) which lasted for Forty Years together in their own Church; when they had two or three Popes at a time, excommunicating one another, and distinctly *Consecrating* and exercising all the spiritual Offices of the holy See. And I hope our *English* Subjects will perceive the Fallacy

lacy and Cheat of renewing this Doctrine at this Time in these Kingdoms, it being to serve a Secular End chiefly, viz. the setting the *Pretender* on the Throne: to forward which, This, and all other Acts of their Religion, are no more than mere Pretences and Imposition upon Men. For, if the *Nonjuring Clergymen* be the only *Lineal Clergy*, (which they affirm to be true) reducing thereby the present Church of *England* to an Universal Schism; there cannot any other possible Way be found to extricate our selves out of this horrible Misfortune, but to bring in the right Heir to our Crown immediately, to turn out the present Royal Family, to degrade all our Bishops, Priests and Deacons from their respective Holy Orders, to deprive them of their Spiritual Livings, and to let the *Pretender* name and constitute new Bishops, the *Nonjuring* Prelates consecrate them, and both together ordain a new *Ministry* in the Church; till which be really done (tho' the Design be all Nonsense and Madness) they account our Ministers Antiscriptural, our Religion Heterodox, and our Laws null and of no Force.

These are the Views of these two Sorts of Men; and to serve these Views, God Almighty must be under their Direction, and excluded his Sovereign Mercy, and the Reason and Necessity of Things give way to impudent and unprov'd Assertions. But! God forbid, that in a World of so much Alteration and Uncertainty, any serious and religious Strefs shou'd be really laid upon Things necessarily subject to Con-

tingency and want of Proof; such Notions are too severe, and unworthy of a good and kind God; for, as it is not material for the present, or indeed any Generation of Men, that the Titles of the Ministers of God's holy Word to their Orders, shou'd be plainly and demonstrably deduced from Christ and his Apostles, on Pain of losing the Title of ones Claim to Heaven; it being as well that nothing appears to the contrary, and that our present Possession, is as good, as if it were so prov'd; so it is our Duty also to imagine that those Believers in Christ, who die in the Heathen Part of the World, without the Advantage of the Offices of the *Ministers of Christ*; or who, for absolute want of better, appoint a discreet and godly Person to officiate in holy Things, are acceptable to God for their good and pious Dispositions, and Intention of Mind, and will save their Souls, by this Means, at the last great Day.



S E C T.

S E C T. VI.

Power of the Christian Clergy.

AS the Civil Magistrate's Business is partly establish'd to protect Clergymen in the quiet Administration of their Office, and not to direct them what Doctrines they shall preach, or what Creeds and Systemes of Belief they shall make use of themselves, or deliver to the People; as the Civil Magistrate is to punish Profaneness, Immorality and Vice where-ever he meets it, because it is destructive of Human Society, and of ill Consequence to every Government and State; but, as he is not to call to Question any Subject for Opinions in Religion, or to oblige him to believe in, or worship God after the Way that he prescribes; so are the Clergy to be cautious the same Way; they having no Power to dictate new Doctrines, *i. e.* any, not to be met with, and prov'd from the Bible; nor to force Men into any particular Faith, with regard to the old ones.

The Gospel is open to every Man; and the Ministers thereof are to expound and preach it to the People, after the honestest and best Manner they can! and the People are to hear and examine what they declare unto them, without being constrain'd to any Approbation purely by their, or any Human Authority whatever; being at liberty, by comparing

paring those Doctrines with the Word of God, to believe or disbelieve them, as they in their Understanding and Conscience are convinc'd.

Again, as to Immorality and publick Offence, the Clergy have Opportunities in their Power, first of private Reprimand and Advice, and if that won't do, but if either they or their Congregations are offended at the Wickedness of some of its Members, the same Things are in their Power in a publick Way; till at length they may deny them that Communion, which is the Blessing and Privilege of all Christians, and upon Obstinaey, may at last go further, and forbid them to appear in their Assemblies. This is all that was in use in the Primitive Church, and such Men were not restor'd without publick Marks of Repentance; which Custom the Church of *England* in her Liturgy very piously wishes were restor'd again.

But that Clergymen have a peremptory Power, as such, even upon ungovern'd, unreclaim'd Obstinaey in a sinful Life, or, for Mens persisting in Heretical Notions; by Excommunicating them, to consign them to Eternal Damnation; and that this judicial Act by a proper Efficacy, gives them over to Satan in the literal Sence of those Words, I can never assent to; 'twere much better, I think, to pity such Men, and to pray for them, and then to leave them to God's uncovenanted Mercy, if any such Mercy there be. Upon which Argument we

may

may also conclude, that the Absolution of of a Clergyman (consider'd as an Act of Office) does not by a mere absolute Vertue of that Act of Office absolve the Sinner from his Sins; for it is certain, that, abstracted from these two Acts of the Ministry, a sincere, believing, repenting, and righteous Christian will be sav'd; and an obstinate, habitual, unrepenting, unbelieving Christian must meet a different Fate. And therefore no mortal Man living can utterly and finally condemn or absolve, as not knowing the Hearts and Consciences of Men. And this Doctrine is so true, that at last it begins to gain Ground in a * Nation hitherto as Popish and fond of the Power of the Clergy, as any other in the World; and has the Countenance of one of the greatest and most powerful † Prelates therein, and of Numbers of other Prelates, and Inferior Clergy besides.

This seems to be the plain and direct Case of every private Minister of our Saviour's Institution; by which a Christian Clergyman, agreeable to the ancient and natural Notion of *Priesthood*, is to offer up the Prayers, Deprecations and Thanksgivings of the People to God, through the Mediation of Christ, to preach the Gospel, and administer the Sacraments, to exhort, rebuke, instruct, but neither to impose Belief on any Man, or to excommunicate him, for not believing what he himself pronounces for Orthodox and True.

* France.

† Cardinal Noailles.

Now, this *Minister*, thus acting, is to be supported by the Civil Magistrate, after the Rights and Customs of the Country wherein he lives; and it is undoubtedly both politick and praise-worthy for *Statesmen* to distinguish the Clergy by Honours and Riches, &c. as they shall think fit; but then this is to be esteem'd entirely of a secular Nature, and not, in it self, essential to Virtue and Piety, or the Interest of the Gospel: Power, and Riches, and Grandeur, and Temporal Rewards and Punishments, Threats and Terrors being Things our Saviour never propos'd for the Advantage and Success of his Doctrines: No; the Cause of Truth was to make its own Way at first, and to continue its Figure and Strength afterwards by the sole Dint of its native Vertues and Perswasions, without the Appendix of Force or Fraud, of Racks or Badges of Honour: And we accordingly see how little of the true Christian Religion remains in those Countries where these Things are made necessary to it. The Spirit of the Gospel is all evaporated into every thing but what our Saviour and his Apostles taught, and the Kingdom of Christ become entirely of this World; the whole Procedure of the *Pope* and his Priests being founded on Temporal Things, on secular Power, on Honour, and Riches and the Schemes and Methods of Men; and these (barbarously and antichristianly) are very often employ'd to serve Things, which the Gospel rejects and abhors; those
Men

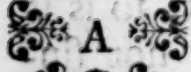
Men under the Umbrage of that, having alter'd the very Nature of Things, decreeing Vertue to be Vice; and Vice, Vertue. Nor can it indeed be expected otherwise, when such a false Tour and Deviation as this is once made. No! the last Extremity must be the Consequence of it. As a Tenure procur'd on the Pretence of God and Religion is the most powerful of any other, so is it likely to do most Mischief, if it be not sincerely and conscientiously apply'd; especially when put into the Hands of Men of Learning and Skill: And, God knows, Melancholy is, and has been the State of those Nations where this has been the Case; all their Misfortunes arising from the secular Doctrines and Power of the Clergy, and from their base Misapplication of things which are of a real *Spiritual* kind: the Miseries of Devastation, Blood, &c. which arise from hence (since *Popery* especially prevail'd) having caus'd more Tears and Affliction, more Sufferings of all Sorts, than all other Causes of publick Calamities put together.



C H A P. VI.

S E C T. I.

Of the CHURCH.

 S these things are true of the Per-
 A sons of particular Clergymen, so
 they are also of collective Bodies of
 them, whether Oecumenical, Na-
 tional, Provincial &c. or of them
 and all the rest of Christians consider'd in one
 Body; or of them and all the particular Be-
 lievers of any one Kingdom, commonly call'd
 the *Church* of that Kingdom: For these and
 all other Assemblies, being made up of so many
 individual Men, who are in themselves fallible,
 they must be fallible also when got together,
 and have no more Power over the *Essentials* of
 Religion then, than they had, when asunder.
 That I may not be misunderstood, let us have
 recourse to what was laid down at first about
 Religion in general; That it consists of Essen-
 tials and Circumstantials, the former of which
 are not in the Power of any Man or Society
 of Men to alter and vary; the latter are; and
 therefore as no single Minister has the Power
 of dictating to his Congregation any thing not
 contain'd in Scripture, as Matter of Faith and
 Practice, absolutely necessary to Salvation, or
 of imposing his own Interpretation of any Do-
 ctrine that is contain'd in those Holy Writings,

as only orthodox and true, and necessary to be believ'd as he represents it; so neither has the Church either of these Powers, whatever sense you take the Word Church in: For Christ our Saviour is the only Head of that Church, is her only Guide and Governour; he himself reveal'd all that he thought necessary to Man's Salvation. And this Revelation he has communicated to all Mankind alike; about some things contain'd wherein, it must be confess'd there did amongst the Apostles at the time of the Delivery of it, and ever since, has appear'd *Hard-sayings*; but then *He*, the Author of it, never thought fit by himself or any other Person, whether Angel or Man, to end these Disputes, and make them demonstrable and plain to every Man the same Way, by any additional Revelations or Explication of all or any Part, or meaning of any Part of what he at first deliver'd: And therefore nothing can be truer, than that every Christian must by all imaginable Means, study and make himself Master of the Meaning of that only Revelation, by Diligence in reading that written Word, (there being no other) by comparing one Part of it with another, and by examining and comparing what other People think of any Part of it, which disturbs and perplexes him, and then he is at Liberty to form the best Judgment about it that he can. But since no Man or any Society of Men, can now pretend to Inspiration, or infallible Interpretation, therefore no one Man's or Mens Opinion can be

definitive, conclusive, and obligatory upon another. There can be no such thing as a *Catholick Church*, which, as such, can determine for Christians, That Church consisting of every individual Christian, who, in this Case, are all upon a Level; Christ alone being their Common-Prophet, Interpreter and Guide; every one of whom are to work out their own Salvation by help of the Bible, and therefore they will not be absolutely directed by one another; not a Layman, implicitly, by a Clergyman; nor the Clergyman by the Layman, nor any particular Church by another particular Church, all particular Churches differing widely one from another. Upon which Foundation, we may now more intelligibly and methodically treat of the Title and Power of the Church.

As to the Title of the Holy Catholick Church, it is certainly of divine Institution, God having appointed Ministers to preach his Word, and having separated Believers from the Infidel World, a Number of whom shall never fail to constitute that Church as long as the Sun endures. But the Title of particular Churches is not Divine, as such; *i. e.* it is not of immediate divine Institution, that in the several Kingdoms of the Christian World, the Governours of those Kingdoms should give sufficient Authority and Power to the whole Clergy thereof, or to any Part of them, to enact Particular Articles of Belief, whether out of the Bible, Tradition, or elsewhere; which

which Articles shall be the very Creed that must save the Souls of all the People of that Kingdom, and be the Regulation of their publick Worship, and of the constant Practice of their Lives: I say, such Acts of Clergymen, or Authority of States deliver'd to them to this end, are far from being of divine Appointment; and therefore the Creeds, Canons, &c. decreed by them, are far from being finally obligatory upon any one Christian Man in any Kingdom of the Earth; although it be highly commendable and necessary, that in every Kingdom such like things should be instituted and ordain'd, after the most scriptural, orderly and decent Manner, for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, and Edification of Church-Members, &c. The Power therefore of a particular Church extends not to the Essentials in Religion; these belong only to Christ its Head; *i. e.* such a Church cannot annul any old or establish any new Doctrines, necessary to guide Mens Consciences, in order to eternal Salvation; nor to determine Authoritatively for the Judgments of its Members, concerning either the Nature or the Number of these Doctrines, nor ought it to be invested with temporal Strength, either by way of Coercion or Rewards, to force or entice Men into the Belief or Reception of them.

As I am a Friend to Episcopacy in the Holy Catholick Church, and wish that Order establish'd throughout all the Christian World, so am I a Friend also to national Churches; it
being

being a thing of too loose and careless a Nature, and which would produce greater Differences and Disorders than now are to be met with, nay, it would end in Irreligion or Atheism, to leave the Catholick Church entirely at large, and let every Bishop in his own Diocess, or every Minister in his own Parish, set up Directories, and make Articles and Canons for others, on pain of Damnation, to entertain and observe: Which shews the Folly of *Independency* and the Wisdom and near Accession to Episcopal Government in the Presbyterian Churches abroad: For which Reason, as the Subjects of every Kingdom, should be very tender and cautious how they divide from, and what Exceptions they make against a national Church, because it is impossible that any human Institution shou'd, in it self, be contriv'd unexceptionable and perfect; and that it is impossible also to please the particular Understandings or Humours of every Subject in a Kingdom, and that it is a Thousand times more reasonable and pleasing to God, that particular Men should bear with many things, and conform to 'em for Peace and Quietness sake, (because Time and Opportunity might bring these things into a Posture more agreeable to their Sentiments) rather than distract and tear a whole Nation to pieces by Divisions and Sub-divisions, taking away that mutual Love and Charity, which is the Beauty and Safety of a Nation, and exposing it both to civil and forreign Confusions and

and War; as I say the particular Subjects of a Kingdom (and Members therefore of a national Church) should give way to the Publick, and yield many things for Peace and Quietness sake, which they could wish were otherways appointed, provided that the Church of that Kingdom requir'd no unlawful Terms of Communion, nor establish'd any Doctrine not to be found in God's Holy Word, or which is directly contrary to the same, or the natural Notions of God and Religion which every Man has that is born in this World; and as a prudent and good Man, wou'd either choose a Kingdom to live in where Church-Doctrines and Discipline were establish'd, which most agreed to his own Notions of these things, or if his Affairs will not permit him to do this, would live quietly in the Kingdom where his Lott is fall'n, and get the best Toleration he cou'd from the Government, for worshipping God after his own Way, without entertaining clandestine Designs, or raising publick Com-motions and Rebellions, to pull down the establish'd Form of Church Government, and set up his own in the room of it; so neither ought the Government of that Kingdom or Church to distress or persecute, punish or threaten, those who dissent, or who, in a Christian Manner, call for Amendment and Reformation in what they think amiss. The Matter of Fact in Popish Countrys, shews how reasonable these things are; and it is evident, we never should have been reform'd

reform'd from *Rome*, nor never shall reform, whatever is still wanting to bring us to Perfection, if these Doctrines be not true, and put well into Practice.

AND now that great Degree of their Uncharitableness appears, who (thro' Inattention and Ignorance I hope) excommunicate their Fellow-Subjects, and so account them to be (Soul and Body) in a State of Perdition, reviling them for *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*, because they dissent from that Church whereof these profess'd themselves Members; and much more uncharitable must we esteem these Persons, who go farther, and unchurch whole Nations, because they differ from their own natural Church in Opinions of Religion; not allowing some of them the very Names of Christians, for want of that Order, which it is known to have been impossible for them to procure at the Time that they reformed. But 'tis to be hoped, that God Almighty will have regard to the Necessity of Things; and I hope also, there are but few Protestants who will affirm, that those Churches had better continued Popish and Idolatrous, than not reform without Bishops, or begin a Church with Presbyters, since the Popish and Idolatrous Bishops would not reform along with them. It is my good Fortune, I thank God, that I am perfectly well affected to the Church of *England* as by Law establish'd; and were it not for the Strength of Education and Prejudice, I doubt not but our Protestant

Dissen-

Dissenters would all conform : I am sure I think them wrong for not so doing ; and believe also, that the too much Heat and Fury of many Conformists, prevents the frequency of this good and peaceable Undertaking. But I am far from conceiving that our establish'd Forms are all entirely perfect, and want no new Inspection ; nay, I really think quite otherways ; and, as some Amendments have been made, and others are prepared, so, I pray God, soon to bring all the Clergy, and every other Subject of these Realms to that even Temper, to that Candour, good Sense and good Nature, which is requir'd to the commencing, as well as the carrying on of so necessary and pious a Work ; in the mean Time, not thinking that Man to be a Schismatick who never was of our Church ; or, whoever leaves it, when convinc'd in Conscience he ought so to do ; and I heartily abhor all Denunciations and Excommunications against them, for so doing.

To set this Affair in a clear Light, let us suppose the Christian Church not to be establish'd, as yet, under the Protection of any Civil Government, nor endow'd with Power, Authority, &c. from the Laws of any Kingdom (which is the Case from our Saviour's to *Constantine's* Time) but that the Ministers of Christ in several Towns and Countrys get as many Believers together as they can, and convert as many Unbelievers as they are able, the Bishops ordaining Ministers, &c. and performing their Offices to the several Congregations as there is

Occasion for them, and the Ministers preaching the Gospel in the best Manner, and nearest our Saviour's Intention that lies in their Power : administering the Sacraments, reading a Liturgy, visiting the Sick, &c. The Question is, how the Case would stand in respect to Heresy and Schism, supposing such Differences in Opinion amongst them, as at present are said to deserve those Names : I can see no more than that every particular Congregation wherein such a Member is, should bear with him, and instruct him, and repeat their Admonitions, and pray to God to enlighten his Understanding ; and in case they could not convert him in point of Error, and he declares his Judgment and Conscience, after enquiry, unalter'd and unconvinc'd, I think it very wrong to proceed in a judicial Way, and to excommunicate him from Christ's Church, or deny him access to hear the Gospel preach'd in that particular Congregation ; for this is *retaining his Sins* in a literal Sense, by putting it out of his Power to be touch'd at publick Sermons or Discourses, or to have the Benefit of the Prayers of the Congregation.

Thus as to Error, for I have fully spoken to the Power of a private Minister, in his Assembly about Immorality, Profaness, &c. But then such a Minister ought and has Power to deny Men the Communion, for Erroneous Opinions of a notorious Sort, and to forbid 'em to appear in their Congregations, because of the Offences they give. And this may serve
to

to let you know what Power a particular Church has in case of other Churches, whom she accounts Heretical, Schismatical, or Erronious: Such a one may by Letter, Writing, or by commissioning able Persons to meet, and treat about their Differences, endeavour to reconcile them into a Unity of thinking and acting with her, and exhort them to embrace the same Faith and Discipline with her; but if they won't do this, but, on the contrary, fulminate and excommunicate one another, they might judge what they pleas'd of the *Power of their own Keys*; but I doubt not but God would have much more Mercy on them all, than they shew to each other, provided pure Judgment and Conscience directed them to their Differences, and nothing else.

And in this Case, I shou'd imagine, that where the Gospel is undistinguish'dly preach'd in many Towns and Countries (which is the Catholick Church) where a particular Church or Churches begin to differ about Worship and Discipline not only, but about Articles of Faith also, and that any one of them arrogantly assumes all the Catholicism and Truth, *i. e.* Infallibility to her self alone, without the Power of Miracles to prove it, or a special Commission from Jesus Christ, the *Head* of the whole Church, and that she excommunicates and damns all other Churches and Persons, who believe not, and do not communicate with her alone; I say, I should suppose her to be the Schismatical and Heretical Church, as having

separated herself from the Catholick Church, by denying Communion to any other, and communicating with no other particular Church. The Unity of Faith and Discipline is to be preserv'd, as well as it can, through all particular Churches, to make up the Catholick Church; and I cannot account any single Christian, or any Church of Christians, to be Heretical or Schismatical, in respect of the Catholick Church, who, to the best of his or their Knowledge and Conscience, believe and practice, the nearest they can, to our Saviour's Intention, taking the Scriptures for their only Guide. I should much rather esteem that such, on the other hand, which assumingly sets up for herself, as the only Orthodox and Christian Church in the World, and which upon this Arrogance, excommunicates all others who differ from her.

If any Man says, that, at this Rate I destroy the Nature of Heresy and Schism, and leave no Man under the Guilt of Error, but level Mankind; whether they be true Believers, or whether they be not; truly I answer, that where Men examine the Doctrines of Christ, and can't afterwards believe them according to the Manner which some Men call Orthodoxy, their Consciences bearing them witness, and their Understandings not being convinc'd that way, God Almighty will certainly pardon and forgive them: And then I can't see how any Man, or Society of Men will forgive themselves,

selves, for having excommunicated or condemn'd them for that Belief.

There is certainly known to God, so much *Christian*, as well as *moral* Truth, existing in the World, and since there are so many various Opinions about many Parts of it; God who knows them all, and sees into the Hearts and Minds of every rational Creature, will judge and determine at the last Day, according to the Sincerity of Mens Thoughts and Consciences; and, where they err from any Part of scriptural Truth, because they had not Capacity or Opportunity of being better inform'd, he most certainly will pardon them at that time, and pity them in the meanwhile.

There is nothing more true than the *Innocency* of some Error, and the favourable Construction that both God and Man ought to put upon invincible Ignorance; the State of which Case, after Volumes written upon the Subject by our School-Divines, can amount to no more than this, that the Condition, in the first place, of those unhappy Persons, is plainly declar'd in Scripture, who *sin'd against the Holy Ghost*; i. e. whom neither Christ himself, nor his Apostles cou'd convince, nor any other Person, who, for a time, had the Power of Miracles, and actually did go out and teach all Nations: But their Children and Successors, who feel nothing of the Advantage of their Predecessors, and for Hundreds of Years together, have been bred up in Turcism and Heathen-

Heathenism; these Men sure cannot meet the same Fate; the Apostle having said, even he, who was peculiarly sent to the *Gentiles*, that they who have no Law, are a Law to themselves: All the Business is, that we Christians have Demonstration for our Priviledges and Salvation under the Gospel; and we are assur'd these may be particularly glorious and advantageous to us, both here and hereafter, if we please. But let us not put bounds to the Goodness of God, and deny others all Manner of Salvation, because we are sure of the happiest and most glorious sort of it: The Christian World is hardly a tenth part of our whole Globe, so that we have a great deal of Room for Charity; only this we know, for the Honour of our Christian Saviour, that whoever is in any Method to be sav'd, shall be sav'd only through him, whether *Jew, Heathen or Christian*; this being an Action worthy of the Son of God, and capable only of his Performance; for, undoubtedly there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby Men can be sav'd.

The Case is the same also of invincible Ignorance, within the Pale of the Christian Church; the particular Churches whereof, may go on to censure, anathematize, and excommunicate one another (and they again their own Members) as long and as fast as they please; but it is certain, that where either Societies or single Men, act according to their Consciences, and the best Informations they

(III)

they can have, and the best Judgment they can make, God will be gracious unto them, let their Neighbours be never so uncharitable and severe. I'll explain this by one of the highest Instances that can be, and that is the Idolatry practis'd by the Generality of the Church of *Rome*: As for those, who, for worldly Ends introduc'd it, Transubstantiation particularly, whereby the Priest is all-powerful, as the Church which decrees it, pretends to be infallible; I leave such Persons to God Almighty, as I do all others who have Opportunities of being inform'd of the Sinfulness of it, and neglect those Opportunities; or who have been inform'd, and refuse the Truth; or, who, out of temporal Ends, still continue in the Practice of the Idolatry of that Church, tho' their Hearts often reproach and accuse them for so doing, (if such as these, I say, there be, I leave them to God Almighty for his Pardon and Mercy; but I cannot but hope that Myriads of Souls in that Church, may plead invincible Ignorance, they not being able to know that they are idolatrous (in worshiping the *Host*, Saints, Angels, and Relicks &c.) by being denied the Bible, and being educated to a Belief in their Church, and parish Priest alone.

If what I have said be true of the Power of particular Churches in primitive Times, in respect of one another, (for I cannot suffer these Arguings to go off into nothing, by using the Word *Church* in a general Way) viz. that they had no Power to impose Doctrines, or explain

plain them Authoritatively and absolutely, either to one another, or to their particular and respective Members; or to excommunicate each other, or their Members, if they did not receive, and entertain them so receiv'd; because I cannot but think, that the Commission of remitting and retaining Sins, was confin'd to the Apostles, and some few others, during the Power of Miracles; because I am sure, that many Sins (of Practice as well as Belief) retain'd since their Days, will not be retain'd at the Day of Judgment, and many more Sins remitted since that time, will be retain'd at the Day of Judgment; so I am perswaded that the Countenance which the Magistrate, has, since *Constantine's* time, given to particular Churches, alters not the Matter, these Powers not being the same in every Kingdom, and it being impossible that any secular Power can add a religious Power of admitting or excluding Members into a sacred Society, of condemning or absolving those Members, of absolute Interpretation of old Commands, or of making new Commands for them, if they, exclusive of that secular Authority, had no Power to do these things of themselves; for the Civil Magistrate has nothing to do with them; Christ is sole Law-giver in the Church, and sole Interpreter of his own Laws, every Man's own Conscience either excusing or accusing him, both as to Belief and Practice; and it is impossible that any one should, in these Cases of Conscience between Christ and him, believe, think, or
act

act for another; the Capacity of men's Understandings, and all Grounds of Perswasion being very different amongst Christians, as well as other Men.

So that when a Church, in a Christian State, says, on particular Occasions, let such a Man, for such a thing be, *ipso facto*, excommunicate; if that Excommunication regards those things alone, which the State might as well take notice of, such as Immorality, Substraction of Tythes, &c. a Man should be cautious, because a temporal Punishment follows it; but if it were an Act of the Church—*fort* purely, and grounded on what that Church might call Error, Schism, Heresy and the like, which in my Conscience I could not account so; I should be sorry indeed to offend a Society of Men, but should pray to and refer my self to God, who knows my Heart, to be forgiven and extricated, and should be in no Pain of being damn'd by him at last, tho' I shou'd go to the Grave without removing such an Excommunication: For it is no Sin in me, nor wou'd God punish me for it, to dye under an Excommunication for Heresy, Schism, &c. if I, in my heart, didn't nor couldn't think that to be an Heresy or Schism, for which I was excommunicated; no, tho' I should mistake: If I had examin'd, and after considering the Affair had determin'd for the Opinion in which I died: But, if to remove the Terror of that Excommunication, I should declare that Opinion, which others call Error, Schism, &c. to be a Sin also, because the Church or my Parish Mi-

nister said it was a Sin, tho' I were not so convinc'd in my Mind, then indeed I die in a Sin, a much greater than the Church or Priest imagin'd before, and I shou'd accordingly suffer for it. The Jews, no doubt, who (in the Gospel) put the Person out of their Synagogue, thought him sufficiently excommunicated and liable to all the heaviest Punishments of that Excommunication ; for, they were then a *Church*, and did this judicially and upon sufficient Grounds to them, but, a *Greater* than they, we know, took him to Salvation, notwithstanding their Rigour and Severity against him ; and, before this Accident, we find *Jeremiah* releas'd by the Temporal Power, when the Spiritual had pass'd an Excommunication upon him : so that not only a single Man but Societies may have erroneous Consciences ; and as they ought not to fulminate one against another, so neither ought they against private Men for bare difference in Opinion.

C O N C L U S I O N.

TO Conclude : Were any *Layman*, (the poorest *Peasant* for Instance) pressing me for a thorough Sketch of Instructions in the Matters before us, I should first bid him constantly attend to the Reading of the *Holy Scriptures*, both in publick and private. I should then advise him, to reconcile himself
to

to a Belief of all the Articles of the *Apostles Creed*; without entring into the many particular Arguments and Disputes, which speculative Men have rais'd about them: And to a suitable Practice of them, of the *Ten Commandments*, and our *Saviour's Sermon* on the *Mount*. I would assure him, that these Things are necessary to Salvation; and, that little Learning, and not much Labour of the Understanding, were requir'd to qualify him to become Master of them, by a due Application for the Help of the *Holy Spirit of God*.

But if he would go farther, and desire me, as a *Clergyman*, to be his Interpreter and Guide in Things of a disputed and intricate Nature, I would fairly tell him, That truly I contented my self, in order to please my God now, and to enjoy him hereafter, with observing the Rules which I had given him; and would freely own, that there are many Things in *Scripture* which I did not thoroughly comprehend, and which are reserv'd to be discover'd in Times to come.

I would then tell him, That, whatever Opinions I should deliver, I could in no ways *authoritatively* impose them upon him, as only true: And that no earthly Power whatever could do it, whether *Church-Power*, or any other: But, that for these, and the whole Conduct of his Life, in regard to eternal Salvation, he must approve himself to his *own* Understanding and Conscience; for, by these alone God would judge him at the last Great Day. In this Case, I would shew him some Diffe-

tences between the Churches of *England* and *Rome*, by way of Warning against all imposing, *Coercing* Churches whatever; and would expose the *latter*, for assuming to make her *Expositions* and *Decrees* equal with, nay superior to the *written Word of God*, and for damning Men for not believing in *Her* and them: But, that I knew no *Church*, or *Church Minister*, who had such a Power; owning my self to be no more than a Subject and Member of the Kingdom of *Christ*, as well as he; and therefore unable to absolve or condemn Men; This belonging to *Christ* alone, our common *King* and *Head*; he knowing the Hearts of all Men. But, being call'd to the Honour of Administring in *External Religion*, I would give him all the Assistance I could this way, *i. e.* would preach to him; pray with, and for him; give him the Benefit of the Sacrament of our Saviour's Body and Blood; and, if he would *press* me to it, would, upon examining into his *Sincerity*, read an *Absolution* to him, since prescribed, in such a Case, by the *Church of England*: But I would also tell him, That the Benefit of that *Absolution* depended entirely on himself, not on me: That I had no Power to forgive Sins; but that, if his Heart was upright, and he had approv'd himself to God, he would be forgiven, whether I read this *Absolution* to him, or not: For I accounted my self no more than an *Assistant*; and therefore very far from being either the *Author*, or Dispenser of his Salvation.

When

When I had gone thus far, I would much enlarge on the Nature of *Charity*: I would advise him to think modestly of himself, his Church, and Party; and not to arraign and condemn; no! Not to censure or slander others, because they don't think as he does. I would shew the Lawfulness and Obligation of communicating with the *Church of England*; would exhort him to attend her publick Worship, and to apply to all the reasonable Functions of her *Clergy*: But then I could say this only in a friendly Way; for, that neither I, nor could the *Church of England*, denounce against him, for not so doing.

I should add likewise, That I wish'd the Legislature would think of some other Proof of Men's *Loyalty* and *Affection* to His Majesty and His Government, than the Receiving the *Sacrament* of our Saviour's most blessed Body and Blood; because this, not only is not a real Proof of it, (their greatest Enemies taking it every Day) but, that I reckon'd it *Sacrilege*, i. e. a Stealing of the consecrated Elements; Things! of an holy and separate Nature; Things! which express the highest Act of Worship in the Christian Church, and applying them frequently to a civil and *profane* Use alone: Nor could I forbear shewing the usual impious Consequence of this; its being *desecrated* by the most unworthy of Participations: So unworthy! That the Nation may expect to be visited on the Account of it. Nor would I fail to answer those who say the Thing is
lawful

lawful and necessary, and that the Persons concern'd must look to these Consequences; by declaring, That this is no Vindication of it, since *OTHER WAYS AND MEANS* of proving our Fidelity to the Government may be found out; by which Means these horrid Consequences might be prevented: For this particular Act is so solemnly set apart by our Saviour for religious Use alone, and is so guarded by requisite *Preparation*, and by severe *Denuntiations* against those who don't make use of this *Preparation*, that I will not express what I think of overlooking this Consideration, and of *forcing* Men either to starve, and not serve their Country, or else to go against their Conscience, and trample on their Saviour, to shew their Loyalty to their King.

I would conclude all, by shewing him the Fallacy of the Cry of *The Danger of the Church*, and the real Design of those who lately work'd up the *Power* and *Title* of the *Crown* and *Clergy* to the highest Pitch; particularly I would explain their Aim in *Unchurching* Protestant Churches Abroad, and raising Terrors from the Power, &c. of Dissenters at Home; telling him, when the *Sacramental Test* was past, how a certain * Advocate for it own'd, that but about a *Dozen* of *Justices of the Peace* were displac'd; and that the last † Author on this Subject says, in 1676, the *Dissenters*
(*Papists*)

* Dr. Swift. † Dr. Sherlock.

(*Papists* included) were but *One* in *Twenty* in the Province of *Canterbury*: nor would I omit, that the Bulk of *Protestant Dissenters* is in *London*, and that here there are not one in many Hundreds, and much less in the remote Parts of the Kingdom: So that People may Harangue, and disturb themselves, and terrifie others, as much as they please, with old Stories, and new Fears: But, the Truth is, this Spirit is abated, and goes on to abate, and will abate; the little Exceptions which were once made formidable, being worn out, and there being not one thing peculiarly great or good, attractive or powerful in the dissenting Scheme, beyond what the establish'd Church can boast of; nay the Preference being on the Church's Side: I wou'd tell him, in Addition to the Decay of this Spirit, that no forreign Power can invade us in Defence of it: But, that *Jacobitism* so encreases, that their Congregations now, on *Sabbath* Days, are thrice more in Number than before the Rebellion; and that treble the Number of Souls appear at those Congregations; promising, on the smallest Apprehension of *Danger*, to be the First who shou'd cry aloud, and warn my Countrymen, against *Protestant Dissenters*: But, that I should be laugh'd at to do it now, since they have so lately been known to joyn with us against the common Enemy, and are ready to do it again on the next Occasion that shall offer.

Having

Having ended what I had to say on these important Subjects, in the most plain, free and charitable Manner ; I can't do better than finish all with this glorious Collect in our publick Liturgy.

O Merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live ; Have Mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks, and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word ; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, World without end. Amen.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 88. Line antepenult, after *some* add *particular*
 p. 104. l. 16. for *natural* read *national*.

